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Lapids' probe urged for corruption over quarry industry

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US excludes RP from list of countries eligible for \$1.5-B aid

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Blackberry pager: Turning into pop culture staple



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American seized with Tarongoy surfaces in video

Tanong ng Bayan / A14

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Poe to get presidential medal, nominated National Artist

By Jerome Aning and Fe Zamora

THE LATE movie actor and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. will receive a presidential medal of merit for his contributions to the film industry, according to the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

NCCA Executive Director and Presidential POE / A7

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Joker hits 'anomalous' IPPs' VAT exemptions

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michael Lim Ubac

AS SHE signed the Attrition Act of 2005, President Macapagal-Arroyo called yesterday for the swift passage of other revenue measures, including the increase in the rate of the value-added tax (VAT), which is facing stiff opposition.

JOKER / A18

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Wednesday, January 26, 2005 *** 52 pages / 5 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 49

P18

website: www.inq7.net



WITH SMILES all around, President Arroyo signs the lateral attrition bill into law at the Palace on Tuesday. The 2nd of 8 tax reform bills considered crucial to avert a fiscal crisis, the law provides an incentive of 15 percent to the BIR and Customs should they exceed their collections by more than 30 percent of their target. Ms Arroyo is flanked by, from left, Senator Recto, Senate President Drilon, Speaker De Venecia and Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar.

Perez quits; GMA accepts

Last of Wall Street boys exits effective March 31



PEREZ, Wharton-educated, sings "Don't You Forget About Me" in his valedictory.

Miriam: 'Kitchen too hot' for Vince

By Christine O. Avendaño

ENERGY Secretary Vince Perez might have decided to leave the government because of tremendous pressure from certain quarters in connection with the privatization of National Power Corp., Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said yesterday.

"My suspicion as a former bureaucrat is that he found the kitchen too hot," Santiago told reporters upon learning of Perez's resignation.

"He must have been under very severe pressure from power

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Abigail L. Ho

EXIT the last of the Wall Street boys.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday accepted with regret the resignation of Energy Secretary Vince Perez, one of her longest serving Cabinet members and the last of her touted trio of dashing and Wall Street-bred economic managers.

In a statement, the President said she had asked the 46-year-old Perez to extend his term until the end of March to make sure that the privatization of National Power Corp. and National Transmission Co. (Transco) would be on track.

Perez himself announced his resignation at a press conference yesterday, confirming the rumor that had been making the rounds for the past weeks. But in lighter moments with reporters on Monday evening, when he sang the 1980s song, "Don't You Forget About Me," he provided an inkling of what was to come.

"I wish to announce that [the President] has graciously granted my request since last year to be allowed to relinquish my post as secretary of energy and return to the private sector effective end of March 2005," said Perez.

Earlier, the rumor was that Perez would take the place of Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima, who had been assigned to replace Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong by mid-February.

Perez said the main reason for his resignation was neither the tough issues besetting the energy industry nor the pressure coming from members of the legislative branch.

He said that after his last day in office, "the No. 1 item on my to-do list is making up for lost time with my family, especially with my ailing father."

Vicente Perez Sr., 78, is afflicted with Parkinson's disease.

Perez was the second Cabinet official to resign in a week.

It was only on Friday that Amatong said she was resigning and would be replaced by Purisima.

Perez abandoned a lucrative career in one of New York's top investment houses when he ac-



JUMPING "juvenile" in action: Environment Secretary Mike Defensor leads a raid on the R2 Manila Harbor Center in Tondo, where he discovers another shipment of alleged hot logs.

Mike to Jamby: No apology, only reconciliation

By Volt Contreras and Michael Lim Ubac

AFTER being called a "juvenile" in the Senate where an opposition lawmaker demanded his resignation, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said he would quit only if he thought he had failed in his duty.

Defensor showed no signs he was caving in to the ouster call aired by Sen. Jamby Madrigal who, in a scathing privilege speech Monday, lambasted the secretary for saying her family was involved in logging in the Sierra Madre.

He just softened his combative tone to an offer of "reconciliation" to Madrigal without issuing a formal apology.

Madrigal yesterday rejected the reconciliation overtures from the environment chief.

"I would like a genuine offer of reconciliation but not an offer of reconciliation to the media," said the senator.

"I can understand where she's coming from, but of course I serve at the pleasure of the Pres-

MIKE / A18

He fought Reds, plotters; quits war vs loggers

By Fe Zamora

A FORMER soldier who fought communist rebels, coup plotters and drug lords without flinching has decided to call it quits as presidential adviser in the war against illegal loggers.

Retired Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus said yesterday he was relinquishing his duties in the campaign against illegal logging because he wanted to "focus on reforestation projects."

"Reforestation is really my line," Corpus, who is holding on to his reforestation job, told the INQUIRER.

He said retired Maj. Gen. Alfonso Dagdag, who used to head the Southern Luzon Command (Solcom), would now be on the

HE FOUGHT / A18



HOT on Defensor's trail, Sen. Jamby Madrigal is not any closer to burying the hatchet, unless it's aimed at Defensor's back.

RP solons slam new US spy teams

By Christine O. Avendaño

TOP LAWMAKERS in the Philippines and the United States yesterday questioned the creation by Washington of new battle-field spy teams for clandestine missions, including counterterrorism operations, in foreign countries.

Senate Minority leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. expressed concern over the move by the US Department of Defense,

and backed a proposal by opposition Sen. Rodolfo Biazon for the setting up of an "oversight intelligence committee" to look into the report.

Pimentel called for an inquiry into the creation of the new US espionage units while citing the case of an American who left the country in May 2002 while facing charges of possessing an explosive in Davao.

Pimentel related the case of one

Michael Meiring who was hurt when a bomb exploded in his hotel room in Davao. He said he found it curious that three US Federal Bureau of Investigation agents and the US vice consul visited Meiring in the hospital.

"How come an individual would attract the attention of FBI agents and the vice consul?" he asked.

After being discharged from the hospi-

RP SOLONS / A18



Perdaya, por diyes, porsyento, Jesuits compile graft lingo

By Armand N. Nocum and Jerome Aning

DON'T be a "wise monkey." Report those who engage in "perdaya," "dos-por-dos" and "RA 1530." Specially if the "man in barong" happens to be a "kangkongressman," "senatong" or "consuholtant." Can't speak the above lingo but would like to learn?

PERDAYA / A6

Poor man returns money he needed for very sick son

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—It was a choice between virtue and his son's life.

Darwin Calvario, 39, was in dire need of money for the operation of his 2-year-old son. Last year, the boy was diagnosed with an imperforate anus (no anal opening) and he needs a cholestomy operation within the year to save his life.

Like his name, Calvario was in agony day after day as his son's chances of surviving were becoming slimmer. From his earnings as a tricycle driver, Calvario had no way of raising the money needed for the operation.

But then money literally fell on his lap.

On Sunday, Jan. 23, Calvario found a bag left by a passenger in the back seat of his tricycle.

POOR MAN / A6

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Marcos too ill to order Ninoy killing-Imelda

THE WIDOW of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos said yesterday her husband could not have masterminded the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983 because he was too ill following a failed kidney transplant.

"When Aquino was assassinated, he (Marcos) was in bed very seriously ill on account of that failed operation which left him without a functioning kidney," Imelda Marcos said in a statement submitted to Persida Rueda Acosta, the chief of the Public Attorney's Office who has pushed to reopen the Aquino murder trial.

The Aquino family and the anti-Marcos groups believe the former dictator was behind the killing.

The Marcos family has denied any connection to the murder at Manila airport on Aug. 21, 1983. No evidence has ever been found directly linking Marcos to the crime and the former dictator was never indicted.

The assassination triggered massive protests that culminated three years later in the "people power" uprising that ousted Marcos and installed Aquino's widow, Corason, as the new president.

Imelda Marcos' statement included an allegation that the plot to kill Aquino may have involved a US surgeon who performed her husband's kidney transplant. She said the surgeon failed to admin-

ister a drug that caused Marcos to fall into a coma for several days after the operation.

"On hindsight, the inexplicable failure of the American surgeon to apply the vital antirejection drug... may have been a deliberate effort on the part of the oppositionists and opportunists to prevent the Marcos administration from securing the safe arrival of Senator Aquino."

"It may have been part of the grand conspiracy to ensure success of the assassination at the expense of the late President," she said.

She didn't identify any of the alleged conspirators.

Aquino's murder was initially blamed on alleged communist hitman Rolando Galman, who was at the airport at the time and was killed by the soldiers just after Aquino was shot. A court, however, later cleared him of responsibility.

Fifteen soldiers were later convicted of murdering both Galman and Aquino.

Acosta last year filed a motion urging the Supreme Court to reopen the case after a new witness surfaced claiming he saw Galman shoot Aquino.

She said the statement from Marcos' widow would support her appeal for a retrial.

"There is still a mystery in the death of Mr. Aquino that must be unveiled so the people will know the truth," she said. AP



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Gov't team flies to Norway to push for talks with Reds

By TJ Burgonio

A TEAM of high-level government officials led by Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo left last night for Europe to convince Norway to resume stalled talks between the government and the communist rebels.

Joining Romulo in the six-day swing to the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Norway are Secretary Teresita Deles, presidential adviser on the peace process, and Norberto Gonzales, presidential chief of staff.

Talks to secure a peace pact between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines have been held up since August last year, when the United States renewed its terror tag on the CPP and its military arm, the New People's Army.

"We have to restart the GRP-CPP-NPA peace talks. And so Norway is a key here. They have been facilitating the discussions between the two groups," Romulo said at a press briefing.

In the Netherlands, the team's first stop, Romulo said they will update Dutch officials on efforts by the Arroyo administration to secure a ceasefire with the guerrillas, who have been fighting to establish a Marxist state since 1969.

The team will also discuss the status of Jose Maria Sison, founder of the CPP, who is living in self-exile in the Dutch city of Utrecht. Sison's application for political asylum had been denied and the courts in the Netherlands had re-

vised his status to that of a political refugee.

"We will convey to the Dutch government the long-standing position of the Philippine government that Mr. Sison need not fear political persecution in the Philippines," he said.

"Mr. Sison is free to join the many other former rebels who have decided to institute change through peaceful means through our political processes," he added, noting that some former rebels had even become lawmakers.

There was no guarantee, however, from Romulo that Sison, who carries a P10-million bounty on his head, will not be arrested or charged in court if he returned to the Philippines.

Romulo said the Philippine government would not go as far as asking the European Union to delist Sison, the CPP and the NPA from its list of foreign terror organizations.

"The listing of certain organizations is because of their own acts, by their own acts. They can effect the delisting by their own acts," he said.

In Brussels, the officials will meet with Belgian and European Union officials to discuss the issue of development assistance for post-conflict areas, Romulo said, citing EU's long history of active support for areas stricken with conflict around the world.

"We hope to increase their commitment and involvement in the success of our own peace process by locking in development assistance programs that would benefit former combatants and rebuild post-conflict areas once we have concluded our peace agreements." With AFP/AP reports

Widow of Kalibo amok-cop wants his body autopsied

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The widow of the policeman who went on a murderous rampage in Kalibo, Aklan, during the Ati-atihan festival has asked the National Bureau Investigation to autopsy his remains.

Ma. Hitzel Moreño told the INQUIRER that the Aklan municipal office report showed that her husband, PO1 Jonathan Moreño, died of gunshot wounds in the left and right sides of his abdomen.

She, however, noticed that his uniform had many bullet holes in the back and in the buttocks, as if the person or persons who shot him intended to finish him off.

Moreño's remains are lying at their home in Toboso, Negros Occidental.

"We have not buried him yet because we want to know how he was killed," she said.

His remains arrived in Negros Occidental on Jan. 18, two days after he went on a shooting rampage. Seven persons, including the Aklan police director and the Kalibo police chief, were killed while 31 others were wounded.

The Philippine National Police, however, is exploring the possibility of granting Moreño burial honors and death benefits.

That is, if investigators and psychiatrists find that Moreño was driven to do what he did by extreme pressure exerted by fellow of-

ficers working for alleged drug trafficker Boy Cuadra, according to Director Arturo Lomibao, Task Force Kalibo chief.

"Even in civilian courts, the accused is acquitted when it is found out that he was suffering from temporary insanity," Lomibao told reporters at a press conference.

If he is acquitted, Moreño would most likely receive death benefits from the PNP, he said.

A major issue in the ongoing investigation is whether he was in fact a "hero or villain," the official said.

Lomibao acknowledged reports that Moreno might have run berserk due to intense pressure from fellow officers trying to bribe him to withdraw as the star witness in the case against Cuadra.

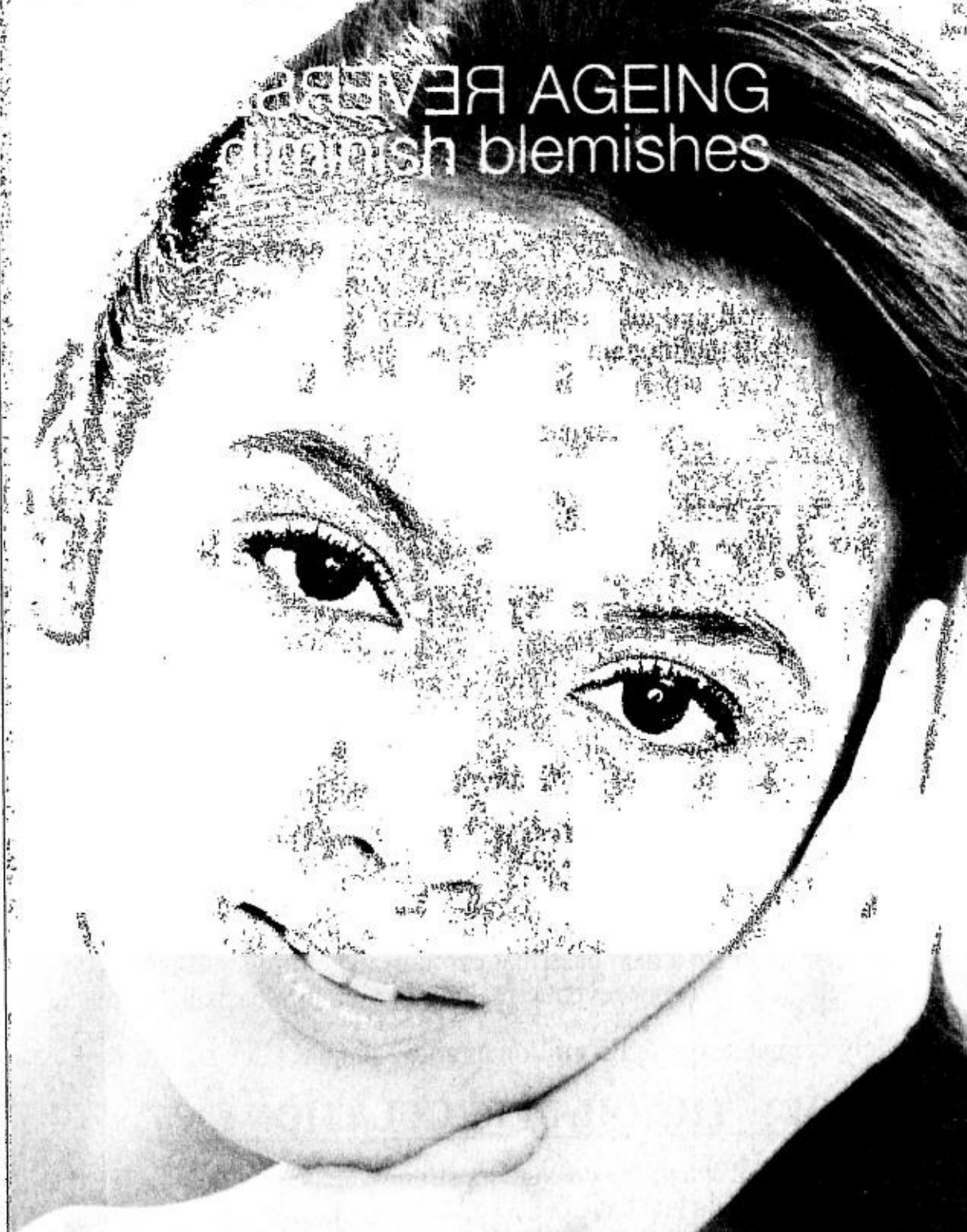
Friends and family members told police that Moreño had been expecting a promotion for his role in the arrest of Cuadra in 2001.

PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay said on Monday that Moreño could not be promoted because he lacked civil service eligibility.

In the meantime, Lomibao said the PNP was uncertain about burial honors for Moreño.

"It will be up to the Aklan provincial commander," he said.

Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate committee on public order and illegal drugs, meanwhile, said Moreño's rampage "insinuates a possible collusion between drug lords and the police." With Christian V. Esguerra and Michael Lim Ubac



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A MESSAGE TO OUR CONSUMERS - PART V

VAT ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND POWER PLANTS IS ANTI-POOR!

The Consumer & Oil Price Watch pleads with Congress not to slap a value added tax (VAT) on petroleum products and on power generating plants. Such measure **IS** anti-poor.

A VAT on petroleum products will surely lead to higher pump prices and thus hurt consumers. Since the bulk of consumers are poor, a VAT on petroleum products is anti-poor and will only result in lower revenues for the government.

If Government wants to generate higher revenues, it should increase instead the present specific or excise tax on petroleum products. However, diesel and LPG must enjoy a lower excise tax since these are socially sensitive products and benefit mainly the poor.

We also urge Congress not to impose a **VAT on power generating plants** using coal, natural gas, bunker, and diesel because such a tax will increase the price of electricity which will be passed on to consumers.

Such an increase will be in addition to the 89-centavo increase given by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) last September 26 and the Meralco pass-on GRAM of P0.17 centavos plus the pending 90-centavo increase still to be approved by the ERC. The total increase is P1.96 per kwh. **THIS IN EFFECT IS A TRIPLE WHAMMY.**

COPW POSITION ON VAT

May we emphasize that the COPW strongly believes that for the value added tax system to be effective, it must (1) expand the tax base, (2) cover the entire supply chain of economic activities, and (3) be equitable by providing a lower VAT rate for products and services sensitive to the poor. In other words, the VAT must be pro-poor.

The COPW favors increasing the VAT from the present 10% to 12% this year instead of in 2006, provided Congress will not again increase the VAT from 12% to 14% by January 2007, if VAT collections fall below 5% of GDP.

INCREASING THE VAT HAS MINIMAL EFFECT ON PRICES OF PRIME COMMODITIES

Raising the VAT to 12% from the present 10% will increase by only 1.8% the prices of prime commodities like sardines, corned beef, pandesal, tasty bread, cooking oil, refined sugar, instant noodles, evaporated milk, coffee refill, toilet soap, detergent bar, flour, steel bars, and even cement. This is minimal.

At the same time, for 70% of residential customers - who consume 30 cubic meters or less of unsewered water from Manila Water - the 1.8% hike translates into just P5.55 per month (from P302.22 to P307.77) in their water bill.

PLUG VAT LOOPHOLES

The COPW believes the following measures will plug VAT leakages and non-payment of taxes as only about 60% of VAT is collected.

1. Use Tax Identification Number (TIN) in all government transactions.
2. Only audited financial statements should be used by banks and financial institutions in granting loans.
3. The BIR admits only 43% of its records are computerized, therefore, heavy investments on computerization should be made.
4. **Benchmarking.** Sales per subsector of industry, trading and services must be benchmarked to pinpoint their input tax credit. This will minimize underdeclaration of sales and overdeclaration of input VAT credits.
5. Closely monitor shipments where input VAT payments have been made but there is a long time lag on the invoicing of sales.
6. Closely monitor computerized sales register and printed invoices.

PROCESSED AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO 5% VAT, NOT ZERO

The COPW proposes a 5% VAT on food products like pork liempo, dressed chicken and brown sugar for the following reasons:

1. Their input VAT credit is likely 3% or more, so that their net VAT payments will be 2% or below.
2. These products are no longer backyard but commercial production and have undergone processing or have value added.
3. Only companies with annual sales of P5 million and over will be covered by the VAT.
4. The Department of Finance can validate their unused input tax credit.
5. Their producers will be consulted and the COPW will assist them for these consultations with the Department of Finance and the Department of Agriculture.

ALL OTHER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS MUST BE SUBJECT TO 1% VAT, NOT ZERO

Agricultural products in their original state (unprocessed) must now pay a 1% VAT for the following reasons:

1. To establish a data base that captures the entire input/output chain. This data base then serves as an audit trail.
2. A 1% VAT is not revenue-making but rather a basis for imposing a future VAT when the economy booms.

Only companies with P5 million or above annual sales are covered.

REVIEW THE OIL DEREGULATION LAW

1. The COPW and the consumers strongly appeal to the President to review the Oil Deregulation Law because there have been abuses. The law has not served consumers well because of lack of transparency.
2. Benchmarks must be established so that oil companies can explain changes in prices without them revealing their "trade secrets".
3. The Department of Energy has recommended such a review to President Arroyo.
4. We recommend independent-minded people like economist Winnie Monsod, AIM President Roberto de Ocampo, former Finance Secretary Jesus Eustanislao, UP President Emerlinda Roman, and Constitutionalist Fr. Joaquin Bernas to conduct the review.




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Perez quits as energy chief

From page A1

cepted an offer from Ms Arroyo in 2001 to be trade undersecretary.

It was his way of showing gratitude to his former mentor, who had written the letter of recommendation that allowed him to study in the United States.

Ms Arroyo had been particularly proud of the looks and educational backgrounds of her front-line economic managers—Perez, Manuel "Mar" Roxas II (once a trade secretary and now a senator) and Jose Isidro Camacho (who quit as finance secretary in 2003)—who, she claimed, had helped her in promoting the Philippines as a good investment site during international roadshows.

Personal sacrifice

The President thanked Perez for his "personal financial sacrifice during his four years of dedicated service to the government," and for shepherding the country through "difficult" power reforms, jump-starting the privatization of Napocor, keeping Luzon black-out-free since 2002, addressing the power supply problems in the

Visayas and Mindanao, increasing the use of indigenous energy resources, and forging power-related alliances with other countries.

But she failed to thank him for taking all the slings and arrows from lawmakers and the public arising from the government's removal of Napocor subsidies, collection of market-based electricity rates, and rejection of appeals to keep oil prices from rising.

Unappreciated?

A source said Perez had long wanted to leave his post because he felt unappreciated for his efforts. The source said Perez was forced to stay in office much longer than he wanted to because there were no takers for the post in view of the surge in oil and power rates and opposition, to the sale of Napocor's assets.

Ms Arroyo promised to announce Perez's replacement "at the appropriate time," but, according to a source, her short list of nominees include Transco CEO Alan Ortiz and Edgardo del Fonso and Rafael Lotilla, former and current chiefs of Power Sector Assets Liabilities and Management Corp. (PSALM), respectively.

PSALM is the state agency as-

signed to oversee the privatization of dozens of Napocor power plants and its nationwide power transmission grid.

Lessons learned

Perez said he had not been able to spend much time with his family since he took on the energy portfolio.

By going back to the private sector, he said, he hoped to spend more time with his father, "maybe take him sailing because he enjoys that."

Golf would be another activity to return to when he has more time on his hands, he said.

The Wharton-schooled Perez said he learned a few things during his stint as energy secretary. Among these, he said, was effective communication, particularly with the masses and the country folk.

He said that with his involvement in the government's rural electrification efforts, he learned not only to speak fluent Filipino but also to communicate with people from all walks of life, particularly those in the lower-income brackets.

"I got an opportunity to see the countryside, to see that there are many less-fortunate Filipinos out there," he said. "I also saw what works and does not work in the

government."

Moving on

To the question of whether he would consider another post in the government, Perez said his only desire now was to go back to the private sector.

He reiterated his wish to spend more time with his family and with himself, and said he had no plans or commitment at present to join a specific firm.

He declined to name those who were in the running for his post, saying only that those being considered were "all familiar with the energy sector."

He refused to confirm or deny that Lotilla and Ortiz were on the short list.

Achievement

As energy secretary, Perez led efforts to reform the power industry, in line with Republic Act No. 9136 (the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001).

It was also during his term that the Philippines achieved a 56-percent energy self-sufficiency rate by end-2004, up from only 45 percent in 2000.

With a report from Reuters

House bats for Lapus as new trade secretary

By Carlito Pablo

LAWMAKERS from the majority and minority blocs in the House are pushing Rep. Jesli Lapus (NPC, Tarlac) as replacement for Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima, who is poised to take over the finance portfolio.

Asked to comment, Lapus, a former bank executive who chairs the House ways and means committee, said he was both "grateful and humbled" by the support of his colleagues, and that he was willing to serve.

But he added: "Let's wait for the President, if she thinks I can best serve at this critical time."

Among those reportedly being considered by President Macapagal-Arroyo to head the Department of Trade and Industry are Juan Santos, former president of Nestlé, and Roberto Pagdanganan, chief executive of the Philippine International Trade Center and former governor of Bulacan.

House Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said Lapus had an "impressive track record in the private sector and in public governance."

"He may be the missing link in the ongoing reorganization of the Arroyo administration's economic team," Nograles said.

In the opinion of Minority Leader Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon), Lapus has

"proven himself to have a good grasp of economic issues."

Lapus himself said even Rep. Prospero Pichay (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) was pushing for his appointment to the DTI.

Pichay, co-chair of the powerful Commission on Appointments, is known to be close to the First Couple.

Bobby Tañada

Rep. Abraham Mitra (LP, Palawan) suggested the appointment of Wigberto "Bobby" Tañada, a former senator and congressman, to the Bureau of Customs vice Commissioner George Jerejos, who is due to retire on Feb. 22.

Mitra described Tañada—a Harvard-trained lawyer, former chair of the Liberal Party and President Corason Aquino's choice to head the post-Edsa I BOC—as "incorruptible."

"The waterfront crooks can't run circles around him because he knows the agency. He's a 'been-there, done-that' guy. He's got the institutional memory," Mitra said.

Should the President choose to replace Public Works Secretary Florante Soriqez, Undersecretary Manuel Bonoan is the man, according to Almario.

He described Bonoan as "very competent in local and foreign-assisted projects, personnel relations, policies and operations."

Perdaya, por diyes, porsyento, Jesuits compile ...

From page A1

Turn to the selected glossary of graft and corruption.

It's in the book, "Ehem! A Manual for Deepening Involvement in Combating Corruption," an antigraft manual published by the Committee on the Evangelization of Culture (CEC) of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus (PSJ).

The book, wrote Fr. Romeo Intengan S.J. in his foreword, is the "Philippine Jesuits' contribution to the struggle against corruption in the Philippines."

Indigenous terms

"The 'culture of corruption' has developed its own intricate vocabulary, which can be gleaned from this glossary of derivative and indigenous terms and concepts on corruption," he wrote.

The PSJ hopes that knowledge of the graft vocabulary "could help in the sensitization process by identifying and labeling the various forms and manifestations of corruption."

Among the colorful new terms—in addition to the now familiar AC-DC (attack-collect-defend-collect), dagdag-bawas (point-shaving), kickback and ko-tong (bribe)—are the following: "Wise monkey" is a "silent and reluctant collaborator in corrupt transactions."

Perdaya was coined from the words per diem and pertains to someone who makes "illegal claims of per diem without actual travel and attendance to assigned activity."

Dos-por-dos is turning in a receipt "with a lesser amount than what was originally received in an official transaction."

"RA 1530" refers to employees "who only report for work during paydays."

Other ways to cheat

Those who do *daya* time record (DTR) are employees who misrepresent their daily time records, oftentimes requesting co-employees to punch them in even if they are not around.

"Main event" is "when cash is disbursed to journalists after a press conference," while *didal* refers to media handlers "pocketing part of the money intended for distribution to reporters," and *bukol* [bump on the head] is "when reporters don't get the money intended for them."

"Men in barong" refers to grafters in government who project an air of respectability with their expensive clothes or "respectable position in government."

Senatong and *tongressman* are senators and congressmen who extract or give *tong* [bribes].

Consultant from "the" word consultant is a "professional for

hire whose immediate and paramount consideration in accepting projects or contracts is the money over and above the ability to carry out the allotted tasks."

Konsehalas is a contraction of the Filipino term for councilor and *halas* [snake]. These are members of city or municipal councils who usurp functions of local government agencies in charge of implementing projects and programs in order to obtain kickbacks and commissions.

Finally, there is *Por diyes porsyento* which comes from the religious expression *Por Diyos Por Santo*, but which refers to the standard 10-percent kickback officials get for awarding a project contract to a bidder or for transactions accomplished.

You've got mail

Meanwhile, Postmaster General Dario Rama has started cleaning house.

The former chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission rid Philippine Postal Corp. of corrupt personnel with the speedy resolution of 172 administrative cases, some of which had been pending for more than a decade.

The cases involving mail pilferage, collection short-changing and other acts of dishonesty were resolved by the PPC's legal department within a 90-day deadline.

So far, 51 erring personnel had been dismissed, 2 suspended, 6 reprimanded, 31 fined, and 7 had been forced to resign.

"We will not tolerate corruption among our personnel," Rama, PPC chief executive officer, told the INQUIRER in an interview.

Don't form committee

He rejected the appeals for reconsideration of dismissed employees and immediately sent the cases to the Office of the Ombudsman for criminal prosecution.

"It was not easy. Some of them had been with the PPC for the past 30 years. They were grandparents or about to retire, some whose families would surely suffer," Rama said.

He added that the speedy resolutions of the cases were done by the PPC's legal department and not by a special committee or body as was the practice in many government agencies.

"I do not believe in committees. If you want to delay something, you form a committee. Me? I just give a deadline," Rama said.

Delaying case

He explained that cases tended to "sleep" at the PPC as some erring personnel colluded with investigators to delay the case until the employees retired or until the prescription for the offense expired.

Miriam ...

From page A1

wielders, power brokers, not necessarily politicians, in connection with the privatization process."

Santiago said she herself felt such pressure only yesterday, when a public official tried to convince her to accept the supposed winning bidder in the sale of the coal-fired plant in Masinloc, Zambales.

The senator had earlier questioned the rush in awarding the Masinloc plant to the group YNN. The Joint Congressional Power Commission, which she chairs, is to convene on Thursday to take up the issue.

'Casual way'

According to Santiago, the public official approached her at the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council meeting yesterday in Malacañang and, "in a casual way, tried to pressure me to accept YNN as the successful bidder."

She quoted the official as saying there was nothing anomalous that had transpired in the bidding process for the Masinloc plant, said to be the best generating company of Napocor.

"I found it strange that someone should attempt to educate me, the chair of the power commission, on why a certain bidder should try to justify why the award was given to someone," she said.

Power play

Santiago said it could have been this kind of "power play" that got on Perez's nerves, prompting him to quit.

Asked who the public official was, she said the person was from the legislature.

Asked if it was a senator, she said her colleagues in the Senate "know me enough by now" to

make such an attempt at convincing her.

To the suggestion that the official was a congressman, she said: "That's an irresistible conclusion."

Santiago said she did not "turn violent" toward the official simply because she was "so dressed up."

"I was not in the right uniform to do what I wanted to do," she said.

Masinloc

Santiago noted that Perez had decided to stay on until March, and was not leaving "before the Masinloc sale is finalized."

Sen. Joker Arroyo aired a similar reaction, saying Perez apparently wanted to complete the sale of the plant.

"He wants Masinloc sold," Arroyo told reporters.

Arroyo also said Perez should resign right away, and not wait for two more months.

He said he was unimpressed by Perez's tenure at the Department of Energy, and pointedly noted that under the latter's watch, oil and power prices did not go down.

The senator also said Perez managed to sell only five generating companies that produce only 6 megawatts of power.

Surprise

Senate President Franklin Drilon, on the other hand, expressed surprise at Perez's resignation.

Drilon expressed the hope that Perez's replacement would be a technocrat. "Political appointees should be avoided in so far as the energy sector is concerned," he told reporters.

Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas wished Perez well, and said the latter was staying for two more months probably because he wanted "to tie up loose ends" and wait for his replacement.

Poor man ...

From page A1

The first thing that came to his mind was to return the money. But some of his fellow drivers were telling him to keep it. He was sorely tempted as he remembered his ailing son.

The choice

He went home that day disturbed. It was a choice between the precious life of his son and returning the bag containing P25,000 in cash and P270,000 in checks to its rightful owner.

But the virtue of honesty instilled in him by his parents over the years prevailed. He chose to return the money.

He went to dxES Radyo Bombo in this city to ask for help in locating the owner, identified as a certain Sarah Dione of Surallah town, South Cotabato.

The woman was profuse with thanks upon seeing Calvario.

She said she hardly expected to get back what she had lost.

Through a friend, who was tuned in to the public announcement of Radyo Bombo, Sarah met face to face with the man of virtue and principle.

Upon learning of the incident, Councilor Lourdes Casabuena, chair of the city council's committee on women and family affairs, met with Calvario.

Casabuena vowed to find help for Calvario's sick son.

Recognition

The city councilor said she would sponsor a resolution giving recognition to the rare display of honesty by Calvario.

"This kind of man is worthy of praise and emulation," Casabuena said.



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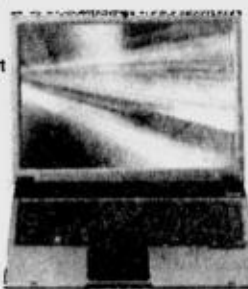


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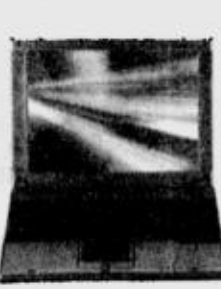
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Poe to get presidential medal ...

From page A1

Adviser on Culture Cecile Guidote-Alvarez yesterday said the presidential medals for Poe, as well as for Zeneida Amador and George Canseco, would be given in February when the agency marks National Arts Month.

Alvarez said she went to the 40th day commemoration of Poe's death and discussed the award with the late actor's family and friends, some of whom openly rejected it.

She did not disclose the results of her informal negotiations but stressed that there had been no formal communication to the family about granting the award. She said it was still up to Poe's family to accept or reject it.

No politics, please

"I think what's important is to insulate the award from politics," Alvarez said.

If politics were a consideration, Alvarez said, President Macapagal-Arroyo would have rejected any move to grant Poe an award or would have immediately given him one.

"Everyone agrees that FPJ had made great contributions to the film industry. Even the President has acknowledged him as an icon. Nobody is using politics in any kind of recognition for his achievements," she added.

Presidential discretion

NCCA Commissioner Trixie Angeles explained that the original purpose of the presidential medal of merit was to "wean presidential discretion" from the National Artist award.

According to Angeles, the medal would give the President full discretion in recognizing anyone—not just in the field of arts and culture—for his or her achievements. The President could also consult artists or field experts about the granting of the medal, which was what happened in Poe's case, she said.

It would be unfair to those who are deserving not to get an award simply because of politics. In FPJ's case, Angeles said, he could be cited for helping the "small people" of the industry, and not just for his achievements in Philippine cinema.

Alvarez said the Presidential Medal of Merit could also be given along with the Gawad ng Manlilikha ng Bayan or the National Living Treasure Awards.

Famas nominates FPJ

In a related development, NCCA chair and Tourism Undersecretary Evelyn Pantig said the Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (Famas) had written the commission nominating Poe for a National Artist award.

Pantig said it would be the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation (Mowelfund) which would fill up the official nomination form.

The nomination period ends on Jan. 31. The National Artist award would be given next year after a tough screening by two panels of artists and experts.

The NCCA officials clarified that those who had been given the Presidential Medal of Merit could still be named National Artist.

Long overdue

Supporters of FPJ yesterday said they "welcomed the idea" of giving Poe recognition for his achievements as an actor, artist and leader of the film industry.

"I think it's long overdue," said Rez Cortez, chairman of the National Coordinating Council of Volunteers (NCCV) for FPJ.

The NCCA and Famas are both prestigious organizations which do not hand out recognition to undeserving people, he said.

He also noted that this time, the nomination had come from the movie industry itself

and not from Malacañang, which earlier said it wanted to honor Poe with a National Artist award.

"This is different. It's a welcome development," Cortez said.

Susan unavailable

During the actor's wake from Dec. 14 to 21, Malacañang announced it would confer the National Artist award on Poe, a distinction that would have allowed

him to be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. His widow, Susan Rocas, rejected the offer.

Yesterday, Rocas could not be contacted for comment on the NCCA and Famas plans to bestow honors on her husband.

"She's out of town," her friend, Marichu Maceda, told the INQUIRER. With a report from Fe Zamora

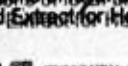
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Consistent with the saint's virtue of simplicity, lavish decor is done away with. Instead, solemn images of the Infant Jesus and the Holy Face will be featured in the center of the altar. Devotees of St. Thérèse will be happy to note that a small part of her relic, a gift from Lisieux, France will be displayed beside her image at the side of the altar in a crystal-covered metal casing.

In terms of guest-friendly facilities, the tranquility of the Adoration Chapel and Remembering Chapel will be ideal for meditating and praying. And for those who are inclined to bringing their babies and toddlers to church, a worry-free Family Praying Room will be provided to make sure solemnity of the mass will not be compromised.

The Shrine of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus is envisioned to be the Center of Devotion to the saint in Asia. As part of this plan, an elaborate Ecclesiastical Museum will be in place which devotees and non-devotees alike will find very appropriate for reflecting on St. Thérèse's life and virtues. It is where artworks depicting the defining moments of the saint known as "God's Little Rose" and love for her simple ways will be featured. No less than the country's top artists have pledged their talent to make this museum a truly awe-inspiring place of adoration.

The Shrine of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus will be open to the public by the first quarter of 2006.

For more information on how you can help build the Shrine of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, please call the Magnificat Ventures Corporation at tel. nos. 635-4680, 635-4527, and 636-6279; fax no. 687-1477; site tel. no. 853-9187; mobile no. (0917) 890-4342; with address at 22nd Floor, Galleria Corporate Center, EDSA cor. Ortigas Avenue, Q.C. 1106. Or visit the shrine's website at stthereseshrine.com.

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Wednesday, January 26, 2005

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Gospel: Luke 10:1-9

The Lord appointed seventy-two other disciples and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place, where he himself was to go. And he said to them, "The harvest is rich, but the workers are few. So you must ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers to his harvest. Courage! I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Set off without purse or bag or sandals; and do not stop at the homes of those you know."

"Whatever house you enter, first bless them saying: 'Peace to this house.' If a friend of peace lives there, the peace shall rest upon that person. But if not, the blessing will return to you. Stay in that house eating and drinking at their table, for the worker deserves to be paid. Do not move from house to house."

"When they welcome you in any town, eat what they offer you. Heal the sick who are there and say to them: 'The kingdom of God has drawn near to you.'"

Commentary

In these first weeks of Ordinary Time we look to our ancestors in faith and how they put the gospel into practice after the resurrection of Jesus. These men (and women) are the second generation: disciples of disciples and were often sent out two by two to preach by their very presence and way of visiting and traveling that the kingdom of justice and peace was indeed already loose in the world. They went relying on hospitality, with only the bare essentials of what they might need—no purses or bags; with no weapons or defenses—no sandals, unable even to run from danger. And everywhere they went they brought Peace as a blessing. They stayed in welcomed and remembered that they came in the name of the Lord.

If you were traveling who would you take with you? What would you consider essential? How do you (or we) practice non-violence and go without weapons or long-term financial security? Is there anything in our lives that preaches the radical presence of the kingdom of justice and peace in the world without words?

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US says Iraq rebels planning big attack

BAGHDAD—Iraqi insurgents have reduced the level of violence in recent days, but may be planning a "more spectacular" attack just before or during Sunday's elections, a US general said on Monday.

Air Force Brig. Gen. Erv Lessel, deputy director of operations in Iraq, said in an interview from Baghdad with CNN that there had been a 50 percent drop in attacks by insurgents in recent days.

"We think it's a calm before the storm, that they're unable to sustain the level of attacks that they've had, but they're saving up for something more spectacular in the days preceding elections

and on election day," Lessel said. But Lessel said he did not believe most Iraqis would be deterred from voting by a new audio tape by leading militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, declaring all-out war on the election. "Most of the Iraqis want to vote... and I think Zarqawi continues to distance himself from the Iraqi people," he said.

In the tape, aired on Sunday, Zarqawi berated Iraq's Shiite majority

for embracing the poll and urged Sunnis to fight "infidel voters."

Zarqawi, who has a \$25 million bounty on his head, says the election is a plot by the United States and Shiite allies against Sunni Muslims, dominant during Saddam's rule.

The US ambassador to Iraq, John Negroponte, predicted Iraqis would be able to cast ballots in most of the country but ac-

knowledgeed there would be "problematic areas."

US commanders have said four of Iraq's 18 provinces, accounting for a quarter of the population, are too unsafe for voting for a 275-seat national assembly to go ahead there.

The government plans to seal Iraq's borders, close airports, impose curfews and enforce traffic bans on election day to try to prevent suicide bombings and other attacks.

Iraq's electoral commission has said 14 million of Iraq's 27 million people could go the polls on Sunday, creating what the UN has described as the biggest security and organizational challenge since Saddam Hussein's fall.

Sunni-led guerrillas have mounted frequent suicide car bomb attacks and ambushes on Iraqi security forces and Shiite Muslim targets in the run-up to the elections. *Reuters*

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Two top operatives of Zarqawi nabbed

BAGHDAD—Iraq claimed Monday it had netted an aide to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi who was plotting election day attacks as al-Qaida's Iraq supreme continued his war on the vote with a deadly car bombing in Baghdad.

The government announced it had arrested Zarqawi lieutenant Sami Mohammad Said al-Jaf, also known as Abu Omar al-Kurdi, blamed for a string of deadly strikes in the country.

Kurdi was responsible for 32 attacks, including the devastating 2003 bombing of the Baghdad UN headquarters that killed 22 people, Sergio Vieira de Mello, the government said.

Zarqawi's propaganda mastermind, Hassan al-Dulaimi, who confessed Kurdi had been plotting attacks on polling centers to disrupt Sunday's vote had also been arrested, the government added.

In custody, Kurdi admitted to a string of attacks in August 2003, including the UN bombing, the assassination of Shiite leader Ayatollah Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim and the truck bombing of the Jordan Embassy, it said.

In an audiotape message posted on an Islamist website Sunday, Zarqawi—the most wanted man in Iraq with a \$25-million price on his head—declared all-out war on the elections he considers un-Islamic and singled out the country's Shiite majority.

His network claimed responsibility for a suicide car bomb attack on Monday at a checkpoint near Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's party headquarters in Baghdad that left two dead and 10 wounded.

In the latest grisly Zarqawi video, an Egyptian driver who worked for a Kuwaiti firm was shown being shot dead in broad daylight on an Iraqi street. *AFP*

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Iran rejects direct talks with US

TEHRAN—Iran ruled out direct talks with Washington on Monday as Israel urged the world to take action against the Islamic republic's nuclear program, warning it could destabilize the Middle East.

US President George W. Bush, just into his second term of office, has warned Tehran not to develop nuclear weapons or risk possible military action, in an escalating round of tit-for-tat rhetoric between Iran and its archfoe.

"We have said before that if anyone wants to talk to us in a threatening language, we will adopt the same tone," Iranian government spokes-person and Cabinet secretary Abdollah Ramazan-zadeh told reporters.

Last week, Bush—who once lumped Iran in an "axis of evil" with Saddam Hussein's Iraq and North Korea—said he could not rule out using force if Tehran failed to rein in its nuclear plans.

US Vice President Dick Cheney also warned that Israel might launch its own preemptive strike to end Iran's nuclear program and he put Iran "right at the top of the list" of global trouble spots.

While Iran insists its nuclear activities are strictly for peaceful energy purposes, the European Union's "big three"—Britain, France are trying to secure long-term guarantees the clerical regime will not seek the bomb. *AFP*

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Tsunami death toll reaches over 280,000

JAKARTA—The death toll from the Indian ocean tsunami continued its sickening rise Tuesday with more than 280,000 people now presumed dead as bodies continued to be recovered one month after the catastrophe.

Indonesia, whose Aceh province suffered destruction so severe that the full death toll will never be known, said it now had 228,429 listed as dead or as missing and presumed dead.

Eleven Indian Ocean nations were hit by the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunamis which ripped apart entire communities.

In Aceh, where an intense effort to help hundreds of thousands of survivors is only just starting to ease with the departure of some foreign military, there are hopes that the tragedy would inspire peace with separatist rebels.

Finland had indicated that it was laying the groundwork for talks between the Indonesian government and guerrillas who have been fighting a decades-long war for independence.

Indonesia's security minister Widodo Adi Sucipto will lead a high-profile team to Finland this week for the peace talks, an official source said.

But the source said the talks had still to be fully confirmed and was unable to say when the officials would leave or how long they would be in Finland. AFP

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Breaking protocol, UN marks liberation of Auschwitz

UNITED NATIONS—The United Nations broke with years of protocol and commemorated the 60-year anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camps, directly linking its own founding with the end of the Holocaust in some of the strongest language ever.

The UN General Assembly marked the anniversary with a special session Monday, the first such session in its history dedicated to the Holocaust, and a watershed event for a body that has repeatedly been accused of an anti-Semitic agenda.

In comments to the body, Secretary General Kofi Annan reversed years of diplomatic silence and directly recognized Jews as the chief victims of the Holocaust, not just one group among many that suffered at the hands of the Nazis.

"An entire civilization, which had contributed far beyond its numbers to the cultural and intellectual riches of Europe and the world, was uprooted, destroyed, laid waste," Annan said.

One UN observer said the commemoration could be seen as being

linked to Annan's new efforts to push for Israeli-Palestinian peace with the election of a new Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, to replace the late Yasser Arafat.

"It's a transcendent moment," said Eve Epstein, vice president of National Committee on American Foreign Policy. "People have been optimistic about what's been happening in the Middle East and I think the secretary general has been doing everything he can to build trust so that the peace process can move forward."

Between 1 million and 1.5 mil-

lion prisoners—most of them Jews—perished in gas chambers or died of starvation and disease at Auschwitz. Overall, 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

The United Nations was created in part because of world leaders' hope that it could help make sure the Holocaust was never repeated. That fact had largely been ignored for years, until Annan stated the fact starkly.

"The United Nations must never forget that it was created as a response to the evil of Nazism, or that the horror of the Holocaust helped

to shape its mission," he said.

World leaders and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, a Nobel peace prize winner, also wrestled with the question that has long haunted the United Nations: whether its member states have the will to stop future genocide. With mass atrocities in Sudan's Darfur region, the question took on new poignancy.

Wiesel, speaking of himself as the Jewish witness, said he knew it was too late for the victims of the Holocaust, but not for "today's children, ours and yours."

"It is for their sake alone that we bear witness," he said. "It is for their sake that we are duty-bound to denounce anti-Semitism, racism and religious or ethnic hatred."

In an institution where minor acts are laden with symbolism, there were plenty of telling signs: Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom was the first national official to speak before the General Assembly. He pointed to the strength of movements denying the Holocaust, asking if there was anything worse than the destruction of an entire race. AP.

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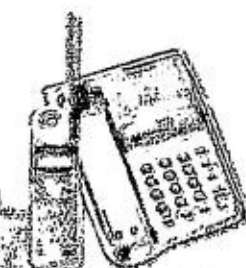
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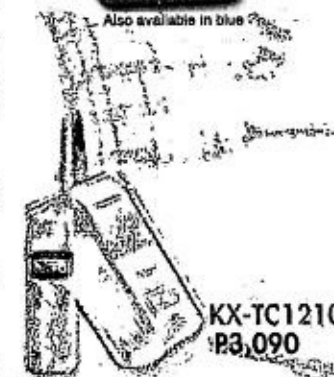
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THIS picture released by Yad Vashem Photo Archives shows the arrival and processing of an entire transport of Jews from Carpatho-Ruthenia, a region annexed in 1939 to Hungary from Czechoslovakia, at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland, in May 1944.

Thailand, Vietnam brace for larger bird flu epidemic

BANGKOK—Bangkok warned that bird flu could kill up to two million Thais as it announced an emergency plan to combat the disease, while Vietnam also ordered hospitals to prepare for a larger epidemic after recording its ninth bird flu death this year at the weekend.

Thailand's deputy premier Chaturon Chaisaeng said Monday the government committee supervising attempts to control the deadly virus had devised a multimillion-dollar, three-year strategy aimed at saving lives in the event of a massive outbreak.

"There will be a stock of 100,000 doses of flu medicine, 10 million masks and preparation to produce vaccines and the preparation of bird flu testing equipment," Chaturon told reporters.

The 776 million baht (\$20 million) Thai scheme was needed because such an outbreak would likely kill some two million Thais, said Chaturon, without indicating how the government had arrived at the estimated death toll.

The virus has been found in a third Thai province, after two outbreaks were detected earlier this month, Thai authorities said Monday.

The latest outbreak of the H5N1 strain of the virus this month had been detected in locally bred chickens in the western province of Nakhon Pathom, Yukol Limlamthong, director general of Livestock Development Department, told reporters.

Some 711 chickens in the district of Don-

toom died of bird flu and 464 others were culled to prevent the disease from spreading, the department said in a statement.

Thailand has been under high alert for bird flu since two earlier outbreaks of the virus were detected in Rayong and Phitsanulok provinces.

Twelve people have died in Thailand from the virus that has swept Asia since December 2003.

"We are deeply concerned about human-to-human transmissions, which would be very dangerous, and it is close" to happening, Chaturon told reporters, adding the latest deaths in Vietnam had added weight to the government's concerns.

Bird flu claimed two more victims in Vietnam Saturday with five other deaths announced last week, bringing to nine the number of people to die there since Dec. 30.

Vietnam's Prime Minister Phan Van Khai has asked hospitals in affected areas to prepare for a larger epidemic.

In total, 29 people died in Vietnam after being infected since the end of 2003. Several suspected cases are under investigation.

Two patients—brothers of one of the victims—are currently hospitalized in Hanoi's Bach Mai hospital after testing positive.

"Both are in stable condition," a health ministry official said Monday.

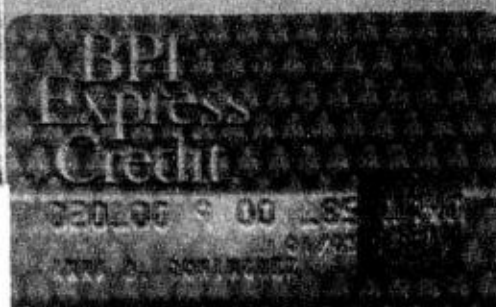
Their older brother died on Jan. 9. All had eaten duck meat together with blood pudding. AFP.



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WORLD BRIEFS

Bush seeks \$80-B military budget

WASHINGTON—The Bush administration will announce as early as Tuesday that it will seek about \$80 billion in new funding for military operations this year in Iraq and Afghanistan, pushing the total for both conflicts to almost \$300 billion so far. Administration and congressional officials said on Monday that the new request would come on top of the \$25 billion in emergency spending already approved for this fiscal year. That means funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan will total nearly \$105 billion in fiscal 2005 alone—a record amount that shatters initial estimates of the cost. In addition to money for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and for new Army equipment, up to \$650 million is expected to be earmarked for humanitarian, reconstruction and military operations in Asian nations devastated by last month's tsunami, congressional aides said. The administration is considering debt relief for Indonesia, the hardest-hit country, they said. *Reuters*

More quakes spark panic in Asia

BANDA ACEH—Fresh earthquakes in Asia on Monday rattled traumatized survivors of last month's killer tsunami, while Indonesia and rebels in Aceh agreed to hold talks, seeking to turn the calamity into a chance for peace. Almost a month after the tsunami killed as many as 234,000 people across the Indian Ocean, a strong earthquake hit Indonesia's eastern Sulawesi Island, killing one person, and a tremor rattled the provincial capital Banda Aceh, sending frightened tsunami survivors running into the streets. Another quake, measuring 6.5, was recorded west of Great Nicobar Island in India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which were badly hit by the Dec. 26 tsunami, but there were no reports of casualties or damage. Police calmed residents who, with TV images of the tsunami fresh in their minds, thought giant waves were on the way. Some patients fled a Palu hospital carrying intravenous drips. *Reuters*

Iraqi judge assassinated in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—Gunmen assassinated an Iraqi judge as he was leaving his home in eastern Baghdad on Tuesday, police sources said. The judge, identified as Qais Hashim Shameri, was killed along with his son in a roadside ambush, the sources said. It was the latest killing in a campaign of attacks by insurgents seeking to disrupt elections set for Sunday. Insurgents have assassinated Baghdad's provincial governor and the capital's deputy police chief in recent weeks. *Reuters*

Five dead as Thai boat sinks

BANGKOK—A boat loaded with up to 40 foreign tourists heading to the Thai resort island of Koh Samui overturned on Tuesday, killing at least five people, police and rescue workers said. About 20 people were missing. The boat was travelling from Pa Ngan Island, where a big party is held every full-moon night, to Samui when the accident happened, police said. "The speed boat was taking tourists back from the overnight full-moon party on Pa Ngan island back to Samui and sank at dawn," Col. Bundit Tungkasernee said from a rescue helicopter. Rescue workers found the bodies of three foreign men and one foreign woman floating in the Gulf of Thailand, police said. The origin of a fifth person found dead could not be determined, police said. The full-moon party is popular among young, back-pack tourists. *Reuters*

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Editor in Chief LETTY JIMENEZ-MAGSANOC
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Islam and peace

ONE of the five pillars of Islam is the hajj, or the pilgrimage every good Muslim is encouraged to take to Mecca at least once in a lifetime. On the last day of this year's hajj, Sheikh Abdul-Aziz al-Sheik, speaking at a mosque near Mount Arafat on the climactic day, denounced the violence waged by Muslim militants against Saudi Arabia.

"The greatest affliction to strike the nation of Islam came from some of its own sons, who were lured by the devil," al-Sheik, who is the Grand Mufti, or senior Sunni imam (teacher-scholar) in Saudi Arabia, said. "They have called the nation infidel, they have shed protected blood and they have spread vice on earth, with explosions and destruction and killing of innocents."

He asked young Muslims, in particular, to ponder the consequences of their actions: "How would you meet God? With innocent blood you shed or helped shed?"

The importance of al-Sheik's most recent statement is best understood in terms of the role individuals such as he play in Islam. There are three major interpretations of Islam as a consequence of the schisms that took place during the 7th century: Sunni, Shia and Khariji. Of these, the most prominent are Shia and Sunni. The Sunni (which means "The Way") interpretation of Islam has the largest number of adherents in the Muslim world: about 90 percent of Muslims are Sunni. Sunni Islam is hierarchical, devoted to Islamic law (Shari'ah law), as interpreted by Muslim scholars and teachers. Of these scholars and teachers, the most senior and influential is the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (although there are muftis in other Islamic countries), who not only makes sermons but also issues statements that define and explain the proper interpretation and relevance of Islamic law to current events. Indeed, among his titles is "President of the Committee of Major Scholars and the Center for Knowledge Based Research and Verdicts."

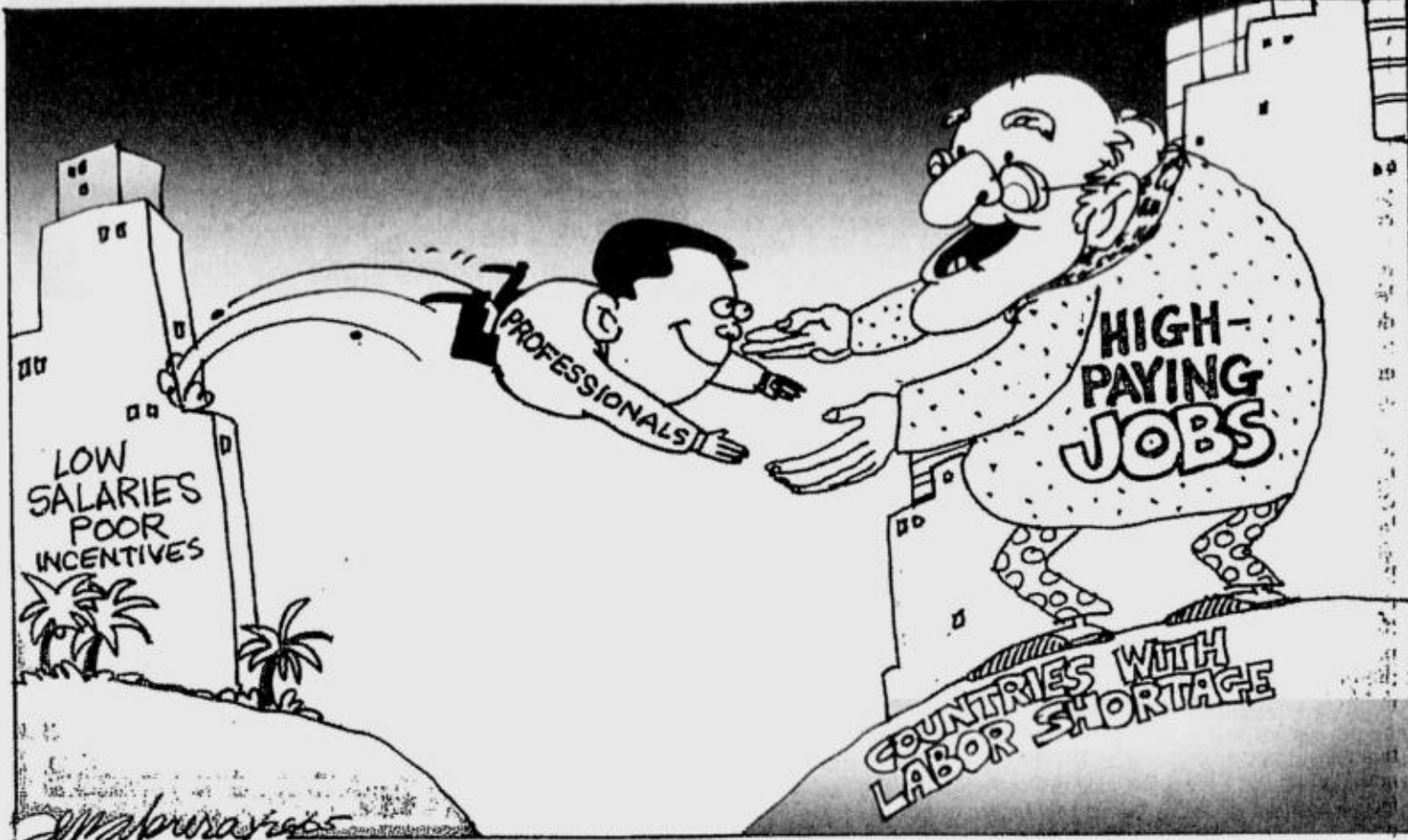
When the World Trade Center was destroyed in 2001, the Grand Mufti swiftly issued a statement declaring the violent attack to be an abomination to Islam. Said he: "These matters that have taken place in the United States and whatever else is of their nature of plane hijackings and taking people hostage or killing innocent people, without a just cause, this is nothing but a manifestation of injustice, oppression and tyranny, which the Islamic Shari'ah does not sanction or accept; rather it is expressly forbidden and it is amongst the greatest of sins."

The Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, then, reiterated to the two million Muslims listening to his sermon that terrorism and terrorist means are incompatible with Islam. He clearly placed the interpretation of Islam that permits terrorism for political ends firmly beyond the pale for 90 percent of practicing Muslims. This is an important teaching that non-Muslims must be aware of.

As the Grand Mufti himself said in 2001, "It is upon the media outlets and whoever is behind them, from amongst those who make accusations against the Muslims and who strive to revile this noble and upright religion, and describe it with that which it is free from, all in order to kindle tribulation and to harm the reputation of Islam and the Muslims and to separate the hearts and constrict the chests—it is obligatory upon them to refrain from this misguidance and to realize that every sane and just person knows of the details of Islam, and knows that it is not possible for him to describe it with these descriptions, and that he cannot make these types of accusations against it. This is because, on account of the passing of history, the nations have not known the followers of this religion and its adherents except to be those who fulfill their rights (due to others) and their absence of injustice and oppression."

It is reassuring at this time that Islamic leaders are channeling the faith of their co-religionists to peaceful ends. But it is equally important for non-Muslims to understand the teachings of Islam, and the interpretation of the same according to its leaders.

Once again the world has been reminded that the Islamic religion is peaceful and non-violent; and that the millions who went to Mecca in recent weeks did so in accordance with the teachings of a faith that does not profess, or condone, sectarian violence and hatred.



Warning to traffic violators: You are being 'shot'

HERE'S a warning to jaywalkers and undisciplined drivers: You think you are getting away scot-free when those aging, shabby-looking traffic aides of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority don't arrest you for violating traffic rules? You don't. In a few days or weeks, you will receive a letter from the MMDA telling you that you have just been "shot" (meaning, photographed) violating a traffic rule and you have to pay the fine at the nearest bank.

Yes, the traffic aides directing traffic act as though they are blind, oblivious to the traffic violations right and left, but you are not really getting off easily. Other traffic aides are surreptitiously taking pictures of you and your vehicle, undeniable proof of your violations, and you have to pay the fine, or else....

What if the driver or jaywalker disregards the letter and does not pay the fine? Again, you will think you are getting away with it. Nothing will happen for weeks and months. You may even commit more violations with no apparent repercussions. But wait until you try to renew your driver's license at the Land Transportation Office. Your name will appear in the computers as a delinquent driver and your license will not be renewed. You may even go to jail.

The penalty for traffic violations, including jaywalking, is a mere warning for the first offense, a fine for the second offense, and a jail term for the third.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando explained at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday other aspects of his campaign to impose traffic order in the metropolis, including his tiff (he calls it "misunderstanding") with a few mayors over the "wet-flag scheme."

"There are only three or four mayors (opposing the 'wet flag')," said Fernando, "but there are 17 Metro Manila mayors. And these three probably thought that the 'wet-flag' scheme will douse pedestrians with water like they do in San Juan during the feast of St. John

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz



the Baptist. No, the 'wet flag' will only wet them to remind them to get off the street."

And here's another warning from Fernando: You think that after the trucks with the "wet flags" pass, you can safely step back into the street to wait for your ride? Don't. There are prison buses following those trucks. If you go back to the street, you will be arrested, thrown into these prison buses and taken to police headquarters where you will be booked and made to pay hefty fines, or jailed if you are a recidivist. The "wet flag" is just a warning of more dire consequences coming behind.

Why don't they just arrest the jaywalkers outright without resorting to the "wet flag"?

"We don't really want to arrest people," replied Fernando. "It's embarrassing to them, is a waste of time, and is hard on their pockets. Arrest is only the last resort. The 'wet flag' is just a fair warning. But if they persist in violating traffic rules, we have no choice but to arrest them."

As for the alleged violation of human rights, what right is being violated? Fernando asked. What gives the jaywalkers the right to wait for rides on the street and disrupt the smooth flow of traffic? Isn't getting slightly wet so much better than being arrested and fined?

The trouble is that when others see violators not being arrested by the traffic aides visible nearby, they think those traffic aides are inutile or are afraid of the drivers and jaywalkers and follow suit, Fernando was told.

"That's their mistake. Sooner or later, the long arm of the law will catch up with them."

No satisfaction

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



One of the things they talked about was clothes. To a man or woman, they wore signature ones, and debated furiously where the best bargains were to be had. I said I noticed Americans did not particularly care to wear generic jeans, or indeed drive banged-up cars. Someone put it to me bluntly: "Kailangan e. Me kulay ka na nga, di ka pa magpopostura. (You can't afford not to. You're colored, you have to look your best)." I didn't realize being brown and not wearing Sunday clothes on Monday constituted double jeopardy.

The same is true right here at home. Malls aren't just a place where you can find what you need, or where you can go to in summer to escape the heat (they've got air conditioners going full blast), they are a status symbol, particularly in provincial towns. The opening of an SM represents more than convenience, it represents the encroachment of civilization. The same fetish for signature items riots, of course. The brand names are to be found in shop after shop, and enjoy no small amount of patronage. I can almost hear the paraphrase: "Mahirap ka na nga, di ka pa poporma (You're already poor, and you don't improve your looks?)" Never mind not being able to sign your name, just wear signature.

It's probably the worst legacy American colonialism has bequeathed to us. Enough for you to ask heaven why we didn't fall, like India, to the British and get in exchange for being entombed in the mines an appreciation for civil service, the railroad system and books. Our concept of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness lies only in owning guns and buying things, including votes.

And then they will learn their lesson," the MM-DA chief replied.

Why don't you make a show of arresting the violators so that others will obey the rules? When people know that erring drivers and jaywalkers are being arrested, they suddenly become law-abiding.

"The trouble with that is that they get into the habit of obeying the law only when they see law enforcers. But they should get into the habit of obeying the law at all times, even when there is no policeman around," Fernando said. "When they learn that they are being photographed by somebody they cannot see and that the summons to pay the fine will come soon enough, they will also learn that 'big brother is watching' them and they will be careful."

"Besides," Fernando continued, "when there is contact between the violator and the traffic aide, that's where the temptation for bribery comes in. The 'no-contact' rule removes that temptation."

Pedestrians are forced to walk in the streets because the sidewalks are full of parked vehicles, if not sidewalk vendors, Fernando was told.

The vendors were allowed to go back to the sidewalks by some mayors during the Christmas season but this privilege should be removed now that the holidays are over, he said. As for the parked vehicles, there really is a shortage of parking spaces in Metro Manila. It is the responsibility of local government units to provide those parking spaces, either by constructing parking buildings themselves, or by giving private business incentives such as tax holidays or loans to construct them. They also should not give commercial establishments business permits unless they can show that they have ample parking space nearby and will not use the sidewalks for parking. Parking buildings earn a lot of money with a minimum of effort and investment.

What our efforts to emulate American consumerism do at the very least is warp values. We define success as possession or accumulation and encourage bottomless appetites, which are the fountainhead of corruption. The late Judge Martin Ocampo was right: We can never obliterate corruption if we ourselves prefer to get as *ninongs* and *ninangs* in our weddings and baptisms not honest men and women who have only a wealth of wisdom to impart but ungodly crooks who have only a cache of loot to dangle. Barry Gutierrez is right as well: Why should anyone imagine he should feel deprived by going back to UP as an assistant professor rather than seeking a lucrative job in the United States at the end of a scholarship, when he is in fact choosing the life of the mind to the life of the mindless?

At the very most, that pursuit of happiness is really the pursuit of fool's gold, also called unsustainable growth. Why do we have to raze more forests and dig more holes in the mountains just so we can have more luxury cars, more TV sets and more signature jeans? You'd think that if we had to make such great sacrifices, we'd use whatever we earned to get more food, more books, more classrooms, more hospitals and clinics, more roads and bridges.

Every time I hear government call for belt-tightening, I laugh because we have such a strange concept of belt-tightening. If belt-tightening means giving up our desperate craving for more and more creature comforts, then that's something we should be doing not just during hard times but during normal ones. At the very least because we are not a rich country pretending to be poor, as a foolish lawmaker said ages ago, we are a poor country believing we are rich. At the very most because even if we were rich, we won't find happiness at the end of that pursuit. The only thing that brings fulfillment when pursued relentlessly is the quest for knowledge. It's the only thing that ought to be unquenchable in life. All the other pursuit brings is, well, Mick Jagger says it best: "I can't get no satisfaction."

Espinosa's opéra comique at Edsa

IN THE MIDST of the fourth anniversary of Edsa 2, the INQUIRER published on Jan. 20, the recollection of retired Gen. Edgardo Espinosa, based on an interview with him on March 6, 2001. Espinosa, who is now in the diplomatic service, was the ring leader of one of a number of groups which were plotting the overthrow of the then beleaguered President Joseph Estrada.

Although the plot, in which Espinosa was the centerpiece, failed to take off and although his recollection did not reveal much fresh information on the dynamic of coup-making in the Philippines, the publication of his account is a valuable contribution to the expanding literature on coups. In particular, it fills gaps in the reconstruction of coup-plotting that has defined the turbulence of political change during the past three decades. The reconstruction illuminates the question of why some coups succeeded and why others failed. The plot with which Espinosa is associated was one such failed coup attempt.

This is not the first time that the plot has come to light. The first time it was disclosed was in my book, "The Fall of Joseph Estrada: The Inside Story." The section on the Espinosa episode was based on interviews with his fellows in the plot. The material on which that book is based is now kept in the INQUIRER's archives. That reconstruction of coup history can be enriched further by fresh collections (such as that of Espinosa) of key players in the many conspiracies that lurked in the dark crevices of power struggle during that murky period of Philippine politics.

Our archival material, plus Espinosa's recollections, as well as those of other generals who are now beginning to tell their side of the military defection in Edsa 2, draw one sharp profile: Espinosa's was just one among the myriad of conspiracies that sprang up during the impeachment trial of Estrada in the Senate beginning in November 2000. From the time the House of Representatives voted to refer the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate on Nov. 13, 2000, thereby clearing the way for the trial of

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



Estrada, his presidency was a wounded beast.

The trial drew blood, and before the first drop melted in the water, the sharks began to scent a meal and circle around the prey. The trial touched off coup conspiracies in both the military and civilian political spheres, with both sectors sharing a single objective: the overthrow of Estrada, through either constitutional or extra-constitutional means.

The impression that the archival material, which I was prompted to review, and Espinosa's recollection, left is that the conspiracies and plots spawned by the trial pushed the country perilously to the edge of a civil war more than we realized following the euphoria of Edsa 2. Although the Espinosa plot failed, the conspiracy, among all other conspiracies of that period, set the country on the stage of a potential military free-for-all, which, had it happened, would have shaped a different outcome from the bloodless overthrow of Estrada.

According to Espinosa's recollection, three days before then Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes announced the withdrawal of support of the military chain of command from the Estrada government, a group of 130 marines had been posted at the Ultra sports complex in Pasig City, a few minutes drive from the Edsa Shrine, ready to break away. The marines were "just a reserve group," he said. "There were also the regulars. They were just waiting for the go-signal. They left the camps in civilian clothes, but they brought their guns. The Ultra was the assembly point. At a given signal, they were to change into their uniforms, bring out their guns and march to Edsa. The plan was to withdraw support from Erap and install Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as

president. We did not plan a junta. We would have fought anyone who planned to set up a junta."

Although the plan was separate from the plot of Reyes, both converged only on one point: they involved Ms Arroyo as the linchpin of their effort to give it legitimacy. Reyes had gotten wind of the plot, but didn't attempt to frustrate it. Espinosa's group was uncertain about Reyes' intentions. It was in the dark about Reyes' activities to line up the support of the chain of command behind a possible defection. Espinosa thought Reyes was "inclined to support Estrada."

The Espinosa group planned to preempt the seizure by any other group of the opportunity to announce a defection at Edsa, including possibly Reyes'.

The group calculated that if the planned march to Edsa had succeeded in generating people power sufficient to bring down Estrada, Reyes would have lost his job and Estrada would have been toppled, following the fate of Ferdinand Marcos and his chief of staff, Gen. Fabian Ver.

Espinosa went further to anticipate the intervention of an apocalyptic event that would have triggered an armed confrontation between Reyes' forces and Espinosa's "breakaway" group.

From Espinosa's recollection, we can see that his group's plot was fatally flawed by hypothetical assumptions that took it for granted that a dramatic march of his troops and announcement of defection would unleash an avalanche of people power that would sweep Estrada from power.

One of the fatal miscalculations of Espinosa's plot was that it didn't foresee Reyes and his group jumping the gun on him and announcing their defection. Moreover, Espinosa's plot had more than a touch of putschist adventurism. It was inspired by the romantic fascination with the "man on horseback," transforming the plot into what the French call opéra comique.

(Why Espinosa failed to give the signal for his marines to march to Edsa will be explained in the second and concluding article on Friday.)

Mozart, Bach and the Pinoy

FRIENDS ask, with sympathy and concern, how I've been able to do my columns, teach, raise Alunsina and do the usual thousand other little tasks while nursing a fractured foot and a broken heart. I smile sadly, and then answer with courage: "Mozart."

No, Mozart isn't a new dog or lover (a canine being preferable these days). I'm referring to classical music in general, my mention of Mozart coming from the growing body of literature around the "Mozart effect" or alleged benefits of classical music for everything from an infant's mental development to boosting egg production in chickens.

I can attest to that with life the last two weeks. I'd get up in the morning asking why the sun had to rise but when I stumble into my study, switch on my satellite radio and as music streams in from a classical station, everything seems so much more manageable. No miraculous effects of course—I know some of my recent columns have sort of plodded along—but I really believe classical music does help.

I'm better today, thank you, and thought I should pay homage to Bach and Beethoven by doing an overview of studies around classical music.

Mozart and Einstein

Let's start with the Mozart effect, a term coined back in 1993 when researchers reported that college students listening to a particular Mozart piece (Sonata for two pianos in D major, K448) performed better in tests for spatial temporal intelligence. After that, researchers began doing all kinds of studies on the effects of Mozart's music with all kinds of claims about beneficial effects for people suffering all kinds of health problems, from Alzheimer's to epilepsy.

The most publicized ones are those around the use of Mozart's music by pregnant mothers. The result? These days, you get all kinds of tapes and CDs in music stores, including local ones, offering classical music and claiming these will help fetuses as well as babies to develop their spatial-temporal abilities. The "Baby Einstein" products, which claim music can help stimulate a child's intellectual development, have separate Mozart, Bach and Beethoven CDs. The Mozart effect has become a generic term for classical music in general since the studies suggest Schubert and Bach have beneficial effects similar to that of Mozart.

I wish I had more space to describe the tests here (sample: getting rats to run around a maze while listening to Mozart 12 hours a day over two months!) but let me just say the tests aren't all that conclusive. One Harvard study, for example, with 714 subjects, concluded that the benefit of Mozart was more of "enjoyment arousal"—an improvement of listeners' mood—rather than a direct improvement of brain function.

No matter. The tests do show some effects on the brain and the effects may be due to a particular pattern in the music. Music with sequences that repeat regularly every 20 to 30 seconds seem to elicit the best responses from the brain, maybe because sleep wave patterns also occur in 30-second cycles.

Compositions by Bach and Mozart seem to have such sequences. Another classical composer, Philip Glass, has a completely different pattern, and doesn't seem to elicit the Mozart effect. On the other hand, a particular piece from New Age composer Yanni, "Acroyali/Standing in Motion," seems to bring out the Mozart effect as well.

Eggs and milk

So, should we play classical music to infants and children? I'll confess I do get these CDs, but more to counter the constant blaring of rap and hard rock from radio and television. The studies on music and the brain do suggest, not surprisingly, that "slow" music (less than 100 beats a minute) seems to be generally more beneficial to animals (including us) than fast music (more than 120 beats a minute).

One New Scientist article had the headline, "Dogs prefer Bach to Britney," where dogs were exposed to music from Britney Spears, Robbie Williams, Bob Marley and a classical CD that included Grieg, Vivaldi and Beethoven. Oh, for additional comparison, they also had Metallica, a recording of human conversation and a tape that was silent. The dogs responded by becoming noisier (Metallica) or more calm (Bach). Pop music had effects no different from the silent tape.

Another New Scientist article, "Moosic to their ears," reported on milk production in cows. Beethoven seemed to stimulate lactation while the Beatles had the opposite effect.

Chickens, too, seem to boost egg production listening to classical music, although an increase was found, too, for Pink Floyd.

Okay, okay, so we aren't chickens or cows. But hey, there's also an Israeli study looking at fast music and its effect on driving. Yes, you guessed it, fast music, especially played loud, seemed to induce drivers to take more risks (which presumably mean more accidents). Note that this was not a specific study on classical music, but generally we'd say rock music has a faster tempo than classical pieces. And I do find that I get more easily agitated if I'm driving with rock music...or even particularly powerful opera music.

Filipinos and classical music

One of my biggest frustrations in the Philippines is the difficulty getting good classical music—džFE, the one and only classical station, has reduced its hours, and the music stores...ask the clerks for "classical" and they point to Frank Sinatra.

I hear Filipinos dismissing classical music as "elitist" or "Western," which is a shame because for all our claims of being a very musical people, we do miss out on very fine music. Not just the Mozart effect and the cow's milk or whatever, but even a chance to participate in the global classical music scene. South Korea, Japan, China and even Singapore now have classical music performers recognized globally. To Imelda Marcos' credit, her support of training for young classical artists did produce Cecile Licad. These days, the support has been negligible.

Don't forget classical music includes chorale pieces and that's a niche we could fill, some of our choirs and chorale groups having won numerous international awards. But again, without government support, the appreciation for classical music will remain limited.

Sure it takes more, much more than classical music to raise a child or do an INQUIRER column or nurse a shattered heart (thanks, Justine), but we do miss out on so much by not promoting classical music enough. I do appreciate the Beatles (not having to produce milk) and Paolo Santos and good acoustic music, but what we seem to favor is really atrocious music, the barrage of rap and Sex Bombs. I wouldn't be surprised if some researcher finds, eventually, that music like that is contributing to the dumbing down of the Filipino.

A land of hope and progress

WHILE waiting for our flight to Manila last week, our media group together with representatives of Knowledge Channel Foundation Inc. and other Lopez companies, were joined at the GenSan airport lounge by City Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr., Sarangani Gov. Miguel Rene Dominguez and Rep. Darlene Antonino Custodio.

The three officials also happen to be among the country's youngest elective officials. Darlene is the youngest congresswoman and, if I'm not mistaken, the second youngest member of Congress, while Dominguez, the son of former Aquino Cabinet member and presidential adviser on Mindanao Paul Dominguez, is the youngest provincial governor. Acharon is in his 40s though he looks many years younger.

Maybe that's the reason the three serve in what has got to be one of the most dynamic and economically progressive regions in the country. GenSan is the hub of the entire Soccsargen (for South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and Gen. Santos City) region, or "development cluster" in the language of technocrats. It derives its wealth from a long and rich coastline, fertile farm fields and plantations, and an excellent road and communications network. At the risk of sounding like a promotional brochure, GenSan also boasts of a world-class airport, pier and fish port. Some in our group who braved the early morning wake-up call got to see the last for themselves, observing the unloading of tuna from deep-sea fishing vessels straight to processing and canning plants.

Seven tuna canneries (out of nine in the entire Philippines) are found in GenSan, each employing some 1,500 workers, many of them young migrant women. The constant influx of migrants in search of jobs from all around the country can account for GenSan's high population growth rate of 5.34 percent. Antonino-Custodio says that if one were to discount in-migration, GenSan's growth rate would be closer to one-two percent.

THE RAPID growth in population and the fevered pace of development throughout the region bring with it attendant problems, of course.

First is the depletion of tuna resources, with deep-sea fishing vessels harvesting the migra-

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



tory tuna in waters off the Pacific Islands and near Indonesia. Sarangani Bay, said the owner of one of GenSan's canneries, has long been "fished out" of tuna. Many of the cannery factory owners, in fact, anchor their businesses on deep-sea fishing.

Pacific tuna, said the cannery factory owner, is vastly preferred over the "oilier" Atlantic tuna that spawn in cold waters. Philbest, a canning factory we visited, exports its canned tuna to the United States and to Europe.

Sarangani, meanwhile, relies on a more varied "menu" of agriculture and aquaculture products to anchor its development. The province is the third largest producer of coconuts in the country, and exports as well fruits and vegetables and rice and corn. Sarangani is also noted for its bangus, with the Dominguezes' Sarangani Bay Bangus already a popular brand of frozen *daing na bangus* in Manila. Tilapia and prawns are also cultivated in fish ponds and prawn farms.

Dominguez has also earmarked several potential industries for further development, such as oil palm plantations, activated carbon production and marble mining.

ONE of the ironies about Mindanao business and development is that, despite rhetoric about the island's being the country's "promised land," its rich natural resources have yet to be fully tapped while the national government has yet to pour the amount of resources needed to bring that vaunted promise to fruition.

On our way from Datu Paglas in Maguindanao to GenSan, we stopped by fruit stalls on the highway in Polomolok, the site of the huge Dole plan-

tation devoted to pineapples and other fruits and agricultural products.

I've always felt a special connection to Polomolok as my father in a way "founded" the town, being the administrator of a group of "pioneers" who settled in this spot in the Koronadal Valley before the war, under the "Land to the Landless" program headed by Gen. Paulino Santos, after whom the city is named.

A former judge who now serves as a city councilor in GenSan, whom I met at a dinner tendered by the mayor, told me he knows of my late father's pioneering work from years of adjudicating land ownership disputes in which my father's name was often invoked as having "granted" ownership of the disputed parcel of land to one of the parties.

So it was with a pang that I realized that my first ever visit to Polomolok should consist of only a brief stopover at a fruit stall along the highway.

STILL, whatever sentiments I harbored vanished with my first taste of Polomolok pineapple, which the woman vendor peeled before us in a dazzling unbroken spiral of the tough pineapple peel. It was like imbibing sugared water, the tangy pineapple flesh lending but a sharp note to the overall sweetness.

We filled our van with boxes of pineapple, bananas, chico, guapple, bright pink macopa, and even clumps of green asparagus. I imagined my parents and the other pioneers, landless farmers from Luzon and the Visayas, running their fingers through the rich loamy soil and imagining their future in the new paradise they had founded.

For my parents, World War II brought an end to those hopes in Mindanao. They never returned to Polomolok except for a brief visit to disinter the bones of their first-born who had died there as a baby. Today, I wonder what they would think if they could behold both the promise fulfilled and the decades of frustration. Their story belongs to the past, but the future of Soccsargen lies in the hands of the young officials we met and the dreams they are able to fulfill.

A tour of 19th-century Manila

PEDRO Ortiz-Armengol, then ambassador of Spain to the Philippines, once invited me to take a tour of Rizal's Manila. It was awkward to be a tourist in my own country, but I spent the better part of a Saturday morning walking around Binondo armed with a copy of "Noli Me Tangere" and guided by a Spaniard holding an 1872 map of Manila. That day Rizal's text found its physical setting.

We started in front of the State Investment House on Juan Luna Street, where the house of Kapitán Tiago (or actually Telesforo Chuidian) once stood. The street was formerly known as Anloague. From there, we crossed a creek to the site of Fonda de Lala Ari where Ibarra spent the night in the beginning of the novel. We walked down Sacristia Street on the side of Binondo church, and the sights, sounds and smells of the area in the 1880s seemed to be there still.

Ortiz-Armengol said that the physical look of a city may change as we demolish old structures to give way to new ones, but the physical outline of a city—its streets, rivers, esteros and other landmarks—changes little.

Since then, I have done a number of explorations of downtown Manila and Intramuros and have gone further afield to the Pasig River using the "Noli" and all the way down to the esteros of Pandacan following the route of "Florante at Laura." So it was quite interesting to be reading Jean Mallat's 1846 work on the Philippines as translated from the original French by Pura Santillan Castrence (National Historical Institute, 1983). Like today's tourist guidebooks that tell us how to get around foreign cities, Mallat left us with a record of Manila in the middle of the 19th century that we seldom get to see in history books.

Mallat described Manila by night when the city was inadequately lit by street lamps. (Today it's still dark in places where street lamps have dead or busted bulbs.) Then, as now, a stroll by Manila Bay was obligatory to watch the famous Manila Bay

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



sunset. Ermita or the Hermitage was said to be "inhabited by the most skillful embroideresses in pifa and sinamay, by painters of different kinds and by fishermen in the bay. Malate leads to Salinas which comes after the fort and an infantry barracks. This road is also that of Pasay, a village where betel nut is cultivated, and is also feared for robbers whom it harbors; it is the Cavite route. Near the small San Antonio Abad fort, one finds a warehouse of gunpowder. To the left, one finds marshes, by means of which, during wartime, one could easily inundate all the surroundings of Manila..."

The areas outside the Walled City are quite familiar to us today, but a description of it in the 1840s leaves a lot for comparison and contrast: "Leaving Pasay aside, one goes to Santa Ana, which is three quarters of a league from Manila. It is a pleasant place on the banks of the Pasig River, where one goes to take a breath of fresh air during the beautiful season. San Pedro Makati is half a league farther than Santa Ana. The air of this village is pure and bracing. It is there that the patients convalescing from dysentery go to recover their strength. Drawing nearer to Manila, one arrives in Paco, called also San Fernando de Dilao, a big village inhabited by artist painters, house-painters, masons and tilers; its church enjoys deep veneration because it keeps, in a magnificent reliquary, a recumbent image representing Our Lord after the descent from the cross; it is known under the name of Nuestro Señor de Paco, and the inhabitants attribute numerous miracles to it."

Then, as now, even petty government officials or non-officials weave through traffic using blinkers and sirens. In those days, only the archbishop of Manila and the governor general were heralded by the ringing of church bells along the route they passed. Paco Cemetery, now a familiar place for weddings and concerts, was then just a cemetery with a pretty chapel and a circular wall. Why some couples choose to start their married life in a mortuary chapel, I cannot comprehend.

Then follows a very fascinating walking tour that has to be read today. Getting off what is now the Sta. Cruz bridge and turning left on Escolta, you walk toward:

"Enlague or the street of the Masons (now Juan Luna), on one side, on the other, Rosario Street, which is quite commercial and dotted with small but rich shops, ranged according to products which lead to the tobacco factory, from which the noise could be heard from afar. Then to San Fernando, at the Alcaiceria, the place where the Chinese sampans unload their merchandise... The main street of Santo Cristo is occupied by Chinese grocers and by merchants of mendicaments of all kinds, by Chinese pharmacies and gambling houses. Misit [actually Melsic which is a contraction of 'may Intsik'], situated to the right, on an island, is the beautiful barracks of the dragoons of Luzon. Tondo... a village of weavers and fishermen, is the garden of Manila; from the products of its vegetable gardens and of its orchards, it furnishes the markets with mangoes, common oranges, and Mandarin oranges, bananas and other fruits of all kinds. Gagalangin is not less famous than Tondo for its oranges; it also provides cow and carabao milk; one goes there to get milk while still hot..."

Tondo a garden? Bancusay a Chinese cemetery? Mallat wrote a tourist guide that is now, how do we say, history.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

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MMDA crew acting like fascists

IN THE MORNING of Jan. 14, we were witness to a commotion in front of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) compound on Edsa: Metropolitan Manila Development Authority personnel were shouting not-so-decent words, hounding hapless street hawkers out to earn a few pesos for their families.

True to our ministry as a sanctuary for the oppressed, we let the vendors into our compound, shielding them from the sticks of the MMDA men. But acting like arrogant cowboys, the MMDA guys tried to force themselves into private property, banging on our gate. And when one of the NCCP staff at-

tempted to reason with them, they became even more fierce, indecent, in fact, flashing the dirty-finger sign as they left the premises. Conduct unbecoming of public servants!

It is revolting that with the government's campaign to win the hearts and minds of its citizens, MMDA workers resort to vulgarities. Moreover, this senseless practice of chasing poor vendors only shows the insensitivity of our so-called public servants.

Here are people wanting to earn an honest buck and they are denied that basic right. Clearing the sidewalks I can understand, but must you hound and pound people? Only fascists do that. And by

chasing them, have you cleared the sidewalks? Definitely not because people must survive and government must ensure that its citizens are provided with means of livelihood. And for as long as no livelihood is available, vendors will continue to sell their wares on the sidewalks. And the poor will continue to take to the streets.

God send us public officials who are decent, respectful and have the poor at heart.

—SHARON ROSE
JOY RUIZ-DUREMDES,
general secretary,
National Council of Churches
in the Philippines,
879 Edsa, West Triangle, QC

God's help

IT WAS with sadness that I read the letter "Age-old question, an answer," (PDI, 1/19/05) especially because the Philippines is the only major Catholic/Christian country in Asia.

Will we never stop blaming God for the disasters which befall us? Why doesn't God not prevent them? But we never see the good that God produces as a result of the disaster. Look at the outpouring of aid and support from all over the world. Must we not focus on this and ask ourselves: If we act this way—share what we have—only during a disaster, wouldn't God use disasters to remind us of what could be?

With the whole world lending a helping hand, is this not an indication that God is watching and trying to tell us something? Or would we rather credit what the world is doing to our politicians, aid groups and NGOs, but not to God?

—RAMON SIYTAGCO,
jungibear@yahoo.com



Another show of arrogance

THE EXCURSION of deposed President Joseph Estrada to Hong Kong, complete with a security detail paid for by you and me, at the behest of the Sandiganbayan, has turned out to be another episode of arrogance and defiance. This serves the anti-graft court right; its justices must be investigated for favoring the accused to the utter prejudice of the people of the Philippines.

Erap is playing with the justice system, and the Sandiganbayan justices are playing along with him under the long shadow of Malacañang's present occupant. Like convicted rapist, former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos doing everything to get a presidential pardon on humanitarian grounds, Erap has been able to delay his trial, tire the public with his antics while successfully mocking the administration of justice.

This is worse than the tsunami that hit 12 nations. This is the legal and moral fiber of our nation and our institutions, which purportedly assure us of a "strong republic," continually being battered by those whose motives are suspect in seismic proportions.

Will we still be surprised if, after his acquittal, Erap will sue the republic and eventually compel it to pay damages for prosecuting him and his ilk?

Only in the Philippines.

—HERNANI R. GERONIMO,
1027 Craig St.,
Sampaloc, Manila

Judge denies taking leave of absence

THIS is with regard to the news article "Judge's Xmas break leaves chaos between workers, contractor" (PDI, 12/26/04) under the byline of Frank Cimat.

It is very unfortunate that the INQUIRER correspondent did not exert even the least effort to verify his facts. Baguio City, where he is based, is at the most just a 30-minute ride to La Trinidad, Benguet where the court I preside over is located.

For the record, I was not on leave beginning Dec. 15, 2004. I reported for work on Dec. 13 to Dec. 17, 2004. My fellow judges, the employees of the courts in Benguet province, can attest to this. I solemnized at least four marriages on Dec. 15 (this can be verified from the civil registrar's office); I presided over the raffle of cases conducted in the afternoon of that same day; and I attended a Christmas program/party at the Justice Hall, La Trinidad, Benguet on Dec. 17.

Due to hypertension brought about by the change of temperature in Benguet, I could not report for work on Dec. 20 to 23 and for this I filed a leave of absence on Dec. 28.

If I may enlighten Cimat, a third party claim is not addressed to the judge; it is addressed to the

sheriff. On this, he should read Section 16, Rule 39 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure, as amended.

I was and still am aggrieved by the news article. Cimat should have known that he is writing for a newspaper that is circulated nationwide, and I hate to be remembered as the judge who caused chaos simply because I was on leave. By the way, all judges and anybody for that matter, are entitled to go on a leave of absence.

May I remind Cimat that there is such a thing as responsible journalism. He should not put anybody in a bad light to earn a living.

—BENIGNO M. GALACGAC,
presiding judge,
Regional Trial Court-Branch 63,
La Trinidad, Benguet

A REPRESENTATIVE of Judge Benigno Galacgac called me for a meeting with the judge but I was then busy with the presidential visit. I told him to call me again on a later date when the judge was free so I could get his side but his representative never called back.

—FRANK CIMATU,
correspondent,
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Promoting international harmony

I WISH to thank the INQUIRER for featuring (PDI, 1/19/05) the picture of "Masjid El Haram" in the City of Mecca, Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It is indeed heartwarming and touches our senses to see it featured on the front page of a Philippine daily. I am sure that by featur-

ing the sacred mosque in Mecca, the INQUIRER helped in promoting local and international understanding, peace and harmony.

—DELLAH S. DIMAPUNONG,
Mindanao State University,
Manila Information Office,
11/F Antonino Bldg.,
Kalaw Street, Ermita, Manila

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OUT THIS FRIDAY, JAN. 28

JUST SHOP magazine is given FREE to Inquirer subscribers in Metro Manila. If you want to be a subscriber, call 528-0183 or 527-3343.



Question of the Week

Do you approve of MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando's "wet rag scheme" to minimize jaywalking in the Metro streets? Why or why not?

Senders of a first 10 texts published in Tuesday's **INQBOX** will each receive an "Inquirer Mug!"

Inquirer news name/city/message.

(Maximum of 160 characters)

*Metro Manila winners can call Jane at 8978808.

Provincial winners can text: Inquirer ad name/city/mailling address to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them.



INQUIRER *Northern Luzon*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Tarlac village romances with Japanese cranes

100 years of Episcopal service

By Desiree Caluza
Sagada, Mt. Province

By Russell Arador
Tarlac City

BALINGCANAWAY, one of Tarlac City's 76 barangays, is said to have derived its name from the Ilocano word *canaway*, meaning "bird."

Small wonder why. Until now, many parts of the small village's 1,057 hectares of mostly agricultural land continue to play host to regularly visiting migratory birds known locally as *tagak* (cranes).

The birds have learned to love stopping by Balingcanaway (pop: 7,000) for food and rest but never for breeding, according to barangay chair Henry Dayao. They regularly descend on the farms and swamps before the start of the planting season from May to August.

Three of the birds' favorite places are called "Danak," "Bana" and "Landing." Landing is called as such because it used to be a landing strip for Japanese warplanes during World War II.

Dayao believes the birds are Japanese cranes migrating from their breeding grounds in Japan during the rainy season there. "But they keep returning to their place of origin and refuse to settle anywhere else," he says.

One reason Balingcanaway is a favorite habitation of the visiting cranes is that they are neither captured nor killed in the village. It is a sight to behold: feathered creatures in groups, drinking and feeding, with white bodies and long necks and legs.

"This makes it difficult for village folk to even think of harming them," says Dayao. People are so used to the presence of the birds that protecting them has become a responsibility, he says.

The village's age-old but untold-of romance with the traveling cranes will hopefully become a well-known part of the history and culture of the city, what with efforts by barangay officials to make the birds' annual trips a tourist attraction.

As an initial effort, a marker was put up at the village entrance to call attention to the place as haven for journeying flocks of *tagak*.

THE ARRIVAL of a faith that knows no boundary is something that people of Sagada, Mt. Province, cherish.

Last December, they celebrated the centennial of the Anglican-Episcopal Church mission by remembering how it had touched their lives. Community members pooled their efforts to stage the three-act play, "The Sagada Mission Saga," to reflect on the changes that the pine-covered mountain town endured amid the help and direction of the Anglican-Episcopal mission.

The play depicted the story of Sagada natives who welcomed the faith "that did not oppress the people." It was written and directed by Jorge Hernandez, based on the historical writings of historian and missionary William Henry Scott and Sagada native Benjamin Longid, and the libretto of Rev. Daniel Cariño.

"The inspiration provided by the ancestral leaders of Sagada and the pioneer missionaries as agents of the mysterious ways God works in human history was the play's theme," Hernandez said.

He said the production was a labor of love for the community. The all-Sagadan cast and crew were composed of teachers, professionals, students, church leaders, farmers and tourist guides.

Sagada was built through the help of American Anglican-Episcopal missionaries led by Rev. John Staunton Jr., an engineer.

Historical drama

Scott's spirit acted as narrator of the historical drama, starting with the story of a head-hunting expedition in Dagdag, one of the old villages of Sagada, by warriors from seven neighboring villages one morning in July 1898.

Teniente Xandaru of the Spanish commandancia in Bontoc organized the expedition on the suspicion that Sagada was harboring members of the secret society Katipunan. Eighty-four Dagdag residents—men, women, children and the elderly—were beheaded that morning.

At that time, in the United States, Staunton, a staunch supporter of the Anglo-Catholic



THE ANGLICAN-EPISCOPAL mission in Sagada, built around the villages, has become a central part of the local community.

PHOTOS FROM ANGEL FLUDEN COLLECTION



SAGADANS attend service at the Saint Mary the Virgin Church in this photo taken in the early 1920s.

movement, was one of the first priests who volunteered to serve as a missionary in the Philippines, a new American colony.

He, his wife Maria, and the Rev. and Mrs. Walter Clapp were the first four missionaries of the Episcopal Church to the Philippines. Rev. Charles Henry Brent was the first bishop of the missionary district in the country.

Staunton was assigned as superintendent of schools in Cebu before he was moved to Baguio City.

A few months after, he was assigned to a new mission station in Sagada.

Land grant

Three leaders of Dagdag *ili* (village)—Lakay Tomas Longid, Lakay Buksitan Bosaing and Lakay Calpe Capuyan—gave Staunton a vast tract of land.

The site, called Paliwak, was a denuded lot that served partly as dumping ground for the community's *sangadil* or death chairs. The area was between the villages of Sagada and their tribal enemies to the east.

The American mission was established to become the buffer zone to protect the *ili* of Sagada from enemy attacks. It was 1904, six years after the 1898 Dagdag massacre, that

had kept Sagada still fearful of similar strikes.

The Stauntons displayed the American pioneering spirit in the town. A graduate of Yale University and the Columbia School of Mines, Staunton built an industrial complex in the area that included an electrical and telephone network, mills, a water system (still in operation today) and stables.

In 1915, Sagada was hailed as one of the outstanding achievements of American colonization in the Philippines.

The Stauntons stayed in Sagada for 20 years. During the period, Staunton would occasionally conduct fund-raising campaigns in the US for the community and the mission.

World War I in 1917 struck a blow to the Sagada mission. Increasing prices of imported fuel and other supplies shut down some industrial operations and aborted projects. However, the construction of the Saint Mary the Virgin Church, the mission's enduring symbol in the town, continued.

The town was ravaged after American forces engaged Japanese forces there during World War II. But through the community's effort, it rose from the debris of countless conflicts.

"You wouldn't believe how many wars these people have been through. But they have kept their bearing, and their humor," Scott's character in the play said.



1611

1ST



Thomasian Students Choice Awards

The University of Santo Tomas is proud to launch the 1st *ustv Thomasian Students Choice Awards on Television*.

This pioneering process-event intends to promote the awareness of the University's more than 30,000 students regarding the impact on their lives of the development and challenges of Philippine media, in particular television. Through the granting of the awards, the University also aims to educate its students and eventually form their critique based on Thomasian values anchored on the Gospel, and to contribute to the further development of mass media in the country.

The success of this event would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts of the Office of the Secretary General, Office for Student Affairs, the Central Student Council, and the Student Organizations Coordinating Council, together with the television networks which responded to the University's invitation to attend this event.

AWARDS NIGHT

January 26, 2005

7:00PM Medicine Auditorium

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GMA asked to probe Lapids for plunder

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Pampanga Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to order an investigation of Pampanga's quarry industry, saying corruption allegedly committed by Sen. Manuel Lapid and his son, Gov. Mark Lapid, involving quarry revenues has reached "plunder proportions."

Guiao asked the President to mobilize the Office of the Ombudsman, the Commission on Audit and the National Bureau of Investigation for the investigation.

The vice governor aired the appeal as he, in Monday's regular session of the provincial board, showed fake receipts and revealed schemes that prevented the accounting of income from quarry taxes.

"The upper portion of the receipt is either torn off or the serial number in them punched with holes. Without the [serial numbers], how can those in the audit [office] validate the receipts with the duplicate copies or check if receipts that proliferate in the field were falsified?" Guiao said in a privilege speech.

"The collection system has been designed in such a way that it leaves no room for government to know how much it is actually earning from sand," he said.

"There is falsification of public documents here," he said, referring to Form 51, considered accountable receipts under the government's accounting and auditing rules.

The INQUIRER made four calls to Senator Lapid on Tuesday but failed to get his reaction to Guiao's claims. In calls made between 9:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., Lapid's aides said the senator was variously in meetings in Malacañang and

with his lawyers and advisers.

Lawyer Filmer Abrajano, Lapid's legal officer, called Guiao's allegations "entirely false."

Governor Lapid reportedly cut short his trip in the United States and returned to the country on Monday night. The INQUIRER failed to reach him through his mobile phone on Tuesday.

Guiao also said personnel assigned to lahar checkpoints to retrieve the receipts, that also serve as passes, were not provincial capitol employees.

Showing certified documents obtained from the government-owned Natural Resources Development Corp. (NRDC) and the office of the provincial treasurer, he pointed to the "glaring discrepancies" in income.

Revenues under the NRDC grossed P145.2 million in 1999, P132.6 million in 2000 and P104.8 million in 2001. The treasurer's office reported P24.3 million in 2002, P10.3 million in 2003 and P10.5 million in 2004.

These agencies collected the same P300 tax for every truckload of sand hauled out of Pampanga.

"The corruption is in the magnitude of plunder. The amounts lost to the provincial government under the Lapids are staggering," Guiao said.

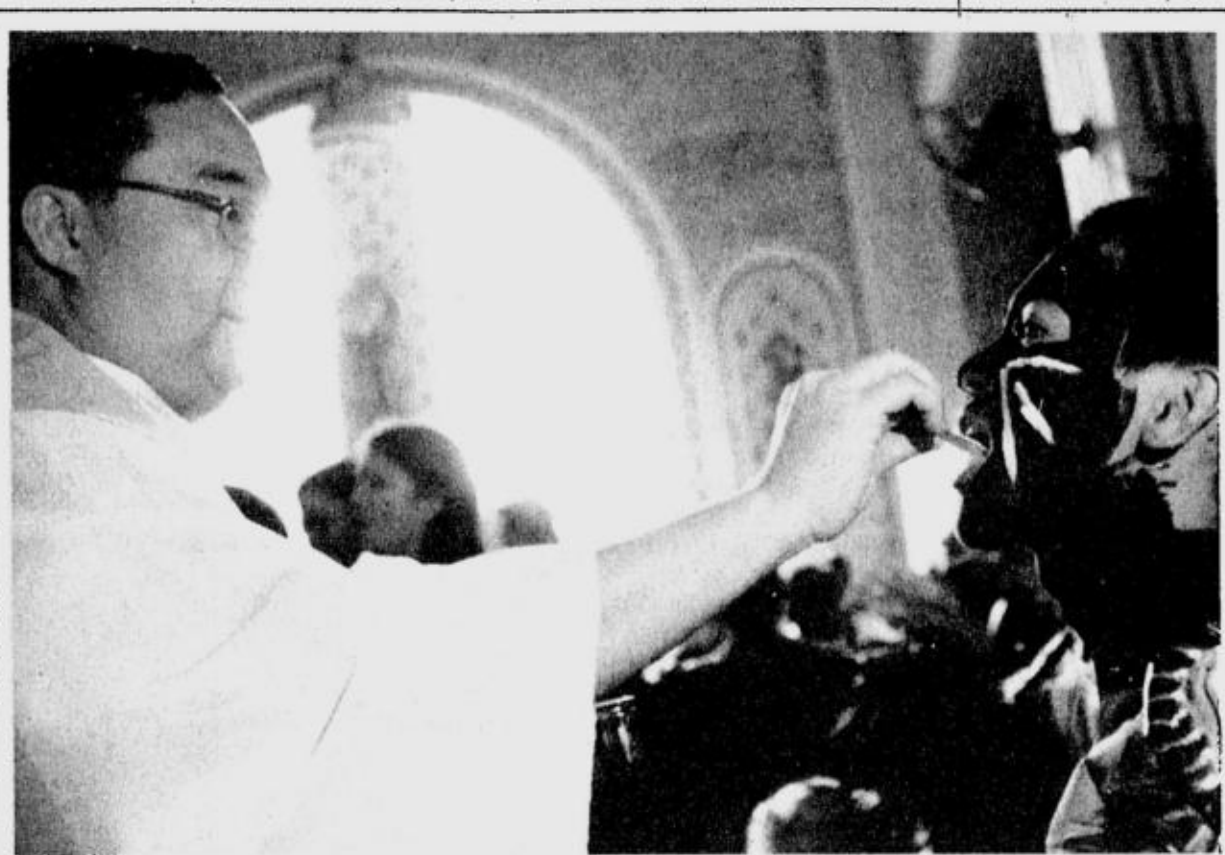
He said an average of 3,000 trucks haul sand from the province daily, and not only about 150 trucks a month as the collection reports indicate.

Senator Lapid chaired the provincial quarry task force during his three terms as governor. His son took over in July 2004.

Four months before the May 10, 2004 elections, quarry income dropped to P195,000 in January, P300,000 in February and almost P500,000 each in March and April.

Under the law, a public official is liable for plunder if the amount of public funds squandered involved P50 million and above.

The delay or non-remittance of revenue shares, Guiao said, had prompted sand-rich towns and villages in Pampanga to devise their own collection schemes.



COMMUNION

A participant in the Dinagyang Festival, Iloilo City's famous annual feast, receives communion at the San Jose parish Church, not forgetting what the festival was all about—to honor the Child Jesus.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Ex-general says top execs behind smuggling

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—The chief of the anti-smuggling task force here on Tuesday blamed top government officials for smuggling inside this freeport.

In a press briefing, retired Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim, task force chief, said some "influential" people in the government and officials of the Bureau of Customs (BoC) are protecting big-time smuggling syndicates here.

"These smugglers have many allies. I have not been going against smugglers only but against their protectors who are helping them with their illegal activities," Calimlim said, without identifying them.

He said some BoC officials have been in connivance with smuggling syndicates and have made it easier for smugglers to operate here.

He said some of these high ranking government officials have been approaching him and trying to bribe him to give in to the demands of their "constituents" who have been suspected as smugglers.

"They do it by text and phone calls. They would explain that they were just helping their friends," he said. "I won't reveal their names because I do not take it against them."

He said charges have been filed

against one of the suspected smugglers.

He said the task force has yet to release a list of suspected smugglers "because there have been no concrete evidence to link them to these illegal activities."

Marietta Zamoranos, Subic customs collector, said 11 smuggling attempts have been foiled since Dec. 1.

Calimlim also shrugged reports about the inquiry called by the House of Representatives about his alleged involvement in smuggling P2 million worth of luncheon meat last December. Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk

House-to-house search for guns set in Cavite

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—In the wake of two massacres in Cavite that claimed the lives of eight persons this month, the regional police director of Calabarzon yesterday ordered a major crackdown on loose firearms in the region.

He also ordered the putting up of police checkpoints along strategic areas and house searches.

Chief Supt. Oscar Calderon said he had already instructed Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, Cavite police director, to apply for search warrants so they could start a house-to-house search for unlicensed guns.

He said the gun slayings in Amadeo and Indang towns last week could have been prevented if only loose firearms in Cavite were effectively controlled.

On Jan. 1, 10 men, including barangay captain Zosimo Poniente, barged into the house of the Mendoza family in Barangay Halang, Amadeo and opened fire, killing four.

Police found 40 bullet casings from high caliber firearms at the crime scene. Seven of the suspects are still at large.

Last week, a drunken Federico Rupido gunned down his neighbor Doroteo Diate, Diate's wife Cataliana and son Marvin after the family let dirty water flow into their neighbor's lot.

Rupido turned himself in after police put up a P300,000 bounty on his head and issued a shoot-to-kill order to get him.

The province also recorded the most victims of stray bullets in the whole Calabarzon region during the New Year revelry.

Calderon said they could not afford to take any chances. He, however, clarified that his order was just a reminder to the different police units as the police are supposedly consistent in their pursuit of gun smugglers and gun-runners.

He said police are now working closely with barangay officials and other sectors to ensure their operation's success. Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Bohol town has 2 mayors as poll body disqualifies winner

By Chito Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

BATUAN, Bohol—This municipality has now two chief executives after Mayor Gregoria Dampog-Pepito refused to step down in favor of rival Sixto Dano who was proclaimed mayor by a special municipal board of canvassers Monday.

"I am still awaiting orders from the (Department of Interior and Local Government) and the Supreme Court," Pepito said.

Dano was proclaimed after the Commission on Elections (Comelec) *en banc* affirmed a resolution disqualifying Pepito for lack of residency.

But in a statement, Pepito said the board "has been very biased in favor of my opponent."

"They disqualified me without giving me due process," her statement said.

The proclamation of Dano was held at the Comelec provincial office in Tagbilaran, about 51 km northwest of Batuan, due to security concerns.

Pepito said she was willing to step down if ordered by the Department of Interior and Local Government and the High



PEPITO

Tribunal.

Pepito was a nurse born and raised in Batuan who migrated in 1971 to the United States. She returned in 1997.

Her statement said more than a year before the elections, she applied for repatriation to reacquire her Filipino citizenship.

"I never regretted that decision," she said. "I came home to Batuan to serve and that is what I am doing now."

She got back her citizenship in October 2003 but has lived in Batuan for six years since her return.

Dano's lawyer, Alberto Bautista, said his client has already assumed office "so there is nothing more to be restrained."

When asked on Pepito's refusal to relinquish her post, Bautista said she could continue to occupy the mayor's seat.

"We will just collect rental from her," Bautista said in jest.

About 200 of Pepito's supporters were seen near the municipal hall but there was no sign of tension.

Insp. Samuel Udtohan, Batuan police chief, said he placed his men on alert just to be sure.

Gov says cops ineffective vs drugs

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz has expressed dissatisfaction over the performance of the police in the campaign against illegal drugs in the province.

The governor told the town and city police chiefs during a recent Peace and Order Council meeting that they were not doing anything

against the drug menace if they had not made any drug-related arrests.

Arnaiz was apparently irked by the fact that many police stations in the province have had no anti-drug operation.

"Let us be frank about it. If you did not make any arrest on drug related cases, you are not doing your job. If you will tell me that you don't have any drug problem in your area of jurisdiction, you are lying," Arnaiz said.

"No city or town in the province

now is free from this problem, which is the mother of 80 percent of the crimes taking place today," he added.

"That is why there are many rapes ... and other heinous crimes because of drugs. Don't wait (until) your children become victimized," said Arnaiz.

He also said a son of a policeman was recently arrested for a drug-related case.

Senior Supt. Marciano del Mar, police director in Negros Oriental, said the police were doing their best.



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Frost destroys P35M in veggies

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—After millions of pesos were lost on vegetable importation and recently on clueless people who refused to touch upland vegetables for fear of contracting meningococemia, farmers here have the weather as their newest adversary.

The Benguet agriculture office said temperate vegetables worth at least P30 million have been lost since December because of frost in at least four towns in Benguet.

Delina Juan, supervising agriculturist of Benguet, said if the temperature in Baguio falls to 10 degrees Celsius, it is usually 5 to 7 degrees Celsius in the vegetable producing towns in Benguet.

Frost forms on the edge of the leaves and turns them to brown, a phenomenon here known as "andap."

Juan said the most affected crops are carrots, cabbages, garden peas, potatoes and cutflowers.

Of the four towns, Atok was the worst affected with damage placed at P20 million, she said.

Atok Mayor Concepcion Balao said more than 200 hectares of farmlands in her town were affected.

Juan said because of the wind chill factor caused by the northeasterly winds or *amihan*, Atok's temperature could go down to 6 degrees.

Atok and Buguias are affected by the *amihan* because they are mostly valleys located at the gap of the mountain ranges where the wind blows, she said.

Buguias initially reported P5 million but Juan said the damage could be worse. Mankayan experienced

frost as early as December and it reported P3 million in damages.

Kibungan reported P1.5 million in damages while Kapangan, Bokod and La Trinidad towns have yet to submit their reports to the Benguet agriculture office.

Due to the effects of the frost, prices of vegetables have gone up.

Carrot sells for P25 a kilogram compared to P10 a kg two months ago. Sweet peas sell for P85 a kg while potatoes sell for P15 to P25 a kg, depending on their size.

Juan said the frost might continue until February.

"The crops are at their most vulnerable because they are still at the vegetative stage," Juan said.

Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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ENHANCED MCU MEDICAL CURRICULUM combines basics, ethics and multi-skill training

Graduates more prepared for board exams



Small group discussions sharpen problem-solving skills.

The Manila Central University-Filemon D. Tanchoco Medical Foundation (MCU-FDTMF) College of Medicine has modified its innovative curriculum to enhance the professional quality and global competitiveness of its graduates.

One of the pioneers in adopting the problem-based learning (PBL) approach in medical education, MCU has finetuned its curriculum based on its PBL experience over the past eight years.

"Facets and principles of the PBL approach have been carefully incorporated into the

modified curriculum, which builds on the strengths of the 'traditional' approach as well," explained Dr. Nenita Collantes, head of the MCU Medical Education Unit.

The core idea is to give medical students adequate preparation before immersing them in case studies designed to foster continuous self-learning. Toward this end, the curriculum has been structured along the various health science disciplines—e.g., anatomy, biochemistry, pharmacology—with some special topics highlighting particular areas of study. The element of innovation comes in through various teaching and learning methodologies to suit the different learning styles of the students.

"We want to provide our students with a strong foundation in the basic sciences and thereby make it easier for them to understand and tackle the clinical sciences," Dr. Collantes said. "Aside from getting a higher quality of medical training, our students also emerge

better prepared for the board exams, which are given by discipline."

While pounding the basics, the modified innovative curriculum also nurtures students to become independent and life-long learners with finely honed skills in problem-solving, critical thinking, reflection, interpersonal relations and communication.

"Our large group activities, primarily the lectures, incorporate strategies to hasten learning," Dr. Collantes pointed out. "On the other hand, small group activities—also known as PBL tutorial sessions—are meant mainly to sharpen problem-solving skills."

The enhanced curriculum is not just about developing skills. The MCU College of Medicine's grading system monitors every student's performance in the three domains of learning: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective.

In order to enhance the attitude and value formation of the

students, units in humanities and bioethics are offered from first to third year. Under this discipline are four modules: institutional values, doctor-patient communication skills, behavioral sciences, and bioethics. In Dr. Collantes' words, "an MCU medical student is, first and foremost, a human being capable of reflection, self-understanding, holistic development and, most important of all, *malasakit sa kapwa* (genuine caring for others)."



Enhanced MCU med curriculum goes strong on basics.



MCU medical alumni give alma mater a boost

Medical alumni of the Manila Central University belong to a close-knit family with members all over the world.

Through the MCU Medical Alumni Association, which has active chapters in the Philippines and the United States, they are able to keep in touch with each other and to lend support to developments in their alma mater.

The MCUMAA in America—which has chapters in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Virginia, Illinois, California, Michigan, Missouri and Kentucky, among others—has been helping the university through its fund-raising arm, the MCU Medical Alumni Foundation. Donations of US-based alumni have made it possible for the MCU College of Medicine to upgrade its audio-visual equipment and reference library and to raise funds for scholarships and community programs.

Dr. Rogelio B. Roncal (MD, 1962, magna cum laude), founder of the "Lightkeepers' Fund", sums up his fellow alumni's general feeling of warmth toward MCU: "We feel a debt of gratitude to our medical school and university. We are committed to support our alma mater and to ensure its continued existence to promote the health and prosperity of our people in the Philippines. In doing so, we help leave the door of opportunity open for those who choose to follow in our footsteps. The stature many of us have achieved, we owe to the values that our parents and alma mater have instilled in us."



Dr. Rogelio B. Roncal

MCU medical grads leave their mark at home and abroad

Medical graduates of the Manila Central University can look forward to the best of all possible worlds. Quality instruction, coupled with a strong service orientation, have molded them into professionals who can succeed in any environment.

Over the past 58 years, MCU has produced medical doctors who have distinguished themselves in various fields of specialization, as well as in allied areas like research, medical education and public service, in the Philippines and around the world.

During the university's recent centennial celebrations, MCU honored some of its outstanding medical alumni.

Among them is Dr. Jacob V. Aranda (MD, 1965), now a professor of pediatrics and pharmacology at the Wayne State University in Detroit and chief clinical pharmacologist of the Children's Hospital of Michigan. A co-author of several books and studies in his field, Dr. Aranda



Dr. Jacob V. Aranda

developed his professional expertise in medical practice, research and instruction at McGill University and the Montreal Children's Hospital in Canada.



Dr. Elenita S. Binay

Another outstanding alumnus is Dr. Elenita S. Binay (MD, 1968), who started her career training in obstetrics at Jose Reyes Medical Center and eventually found her calling in public service. She served as mayor of Makati City from 1998 to 2001 and continues to be a member of the executive committee of the International Union of Local Authorities, Asia-Pacific Section. As president of the Makati Social Services Foundation and board member of the Ospital ng Makati Foundation, Dr. Binay has brought the quality of public services to the city's residents to new heights.

In the field of health science research, MCU is likewise making its mark, thanks to Dr. Gemiliano D.L. Alligul



Dr. Gemiliano D.L. Alligul

(MD, 1980), who has served as executive director of the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, Department of Science and Technology, and as assistant director of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, Department of Health.



Dr. Hubert Isaac Ramos

Among the MCU medical alumni who have taken unique career paths are Dr. Hubert Isaac Ramos (MD, 1966) and Dr. Concepcion Abesamis-Roy (MD, 1962). Dr. Ramos started as lieutenant in the Medical Corps, Philippine Navy and, eventually retired as Commander of the Medical Corps, US Navy. Dr. Roy started as a professor of medicine at MCU before joining the US Army Medical Corps based in Fort Hamilton, New York, where she retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel. At one point, she was the medical officer on call for General Omar



Dr. Concepcion A. Roy

Bradley and the widow of General Douglas MacArthur. The first president of the MCU Alumni Foundation in America, Dr. Roy is back in the Philippines as an active endocrinologist and an inspirational speaker of the Couples for Christ.

The university also ranks among the highest in terms of service to the community. Exemplifying this is Dr. Felix A. Valenzuela (MD, 1962), 1990 Rizal Awardee for Rural Service and Most Outstanding Physician of Negros Occidental in 1988.

In fact, MCU has enjoyed the distinction of having the most medical graduates choosing to work in the rural areas. A Department of Health survey in the early 1990s revealed that majority of the municipal health officers serving the 1,300 towns with doctors were MCU graduates, according to Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan, who was chief of staff to the Health Secretary at the time



Dr. Felix A. Valenzuela

RP solons slam new US spy teams

From page A1

tal, Meiring left Davao on a plane chartered by a certain International Medical Foundation and then flew out to Singapore a week later while he was facing charges of illegal possession of explosives, Pimentel said.

Enrile: No need for spies

Interpellating Pimentel, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said there was actually no need for the United States to spy on the country.

"We're an open society," Enrile said. "We talk too much, just talk to some Filipinos in coffee shops."

In a statement, Pimentel said: "What is important is we try as best as we can to prevent the US from treating the Philippines as a neo-colony. We must make sure that it is not used to infringe on our sovereignty."

Senate Majority leader Francis Pangilinan said the request of Pimentel for an inquiry would be referred to the Senate rules committee pending the creation of an oversight committee on intelligence.

Special forces in RP

In Washington, senior members of the US Congress said they would seek to determine whether

the Pentagon had overstepped its bounds by creating the secret battlefield intelligence units within the Defense Intelligence Agency.

A senior military officer and a senior Pentagon official confirmed at a hastily called briefing that small teams of civilian intelligence specialists were being created to work with Special Operations forces and other troops worldwide on counterterrorism and other secret missions.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone told Manila-based foreign correspondents on Monday that 70 American military personnel were training troops in Mindanao in intelligence-gathering.

The training led to the arrest or killing of "25 identified, known, no-doubt-about it terrorist leaders" last year, Ricciardone was quoted by Agence France-Presse as saying.

Units of the US Special Forces have been operating in Mindanao, with Philippine government approval, for the past few years and it was not clear from Ricciardone's statements if, or how, their mission fitted in with the new US espionage concept.

The Washington Post had said the Philippines, as well as Indonesia, was among the target countries mentioned in an early

planning document on the creation of the new spy groups.

Pentagon confirms report

US military and Pentagon officials said the espionage teams had been formally established in the fiscal year 2005 defense budget using existing authority to replace ad hoc defense intelligence units that had been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan for more than two years.

"These teams would be involved in clandestine operations where their identities would not be known, but not in covert operations," said a senior military official.

Covert operations require a special presidential "finding" and would be disavowed by the United States if they were discovered. A clandestine operation can be carried out under the existing authorities of the director of central intelligence, the official said.

US Congress not informed

Members of the US Congress from both parties questioned whether the secret missions being carried out by the units might amount to covert actions.

Some members also said the House and Senate intelligence committees had not been fully informed about the new approach.

"To cut out Congress and set up an under-the-radar capability which Congress doesn't know about is not OK," Rep. Jane Harman, the top Democrat on the House intelligence committee, said in an interview.

But Sen. John W. Warner, R-Va., who heads the armed services committee, said the intelligence teams were "vital to our national security interests" and that their existence was included in Pentagon budget documents that the committee reviewed and approved.

What's in a name?

The Pentagon officials said Congress had been informed about the teams during the budget discussions late last year, but they said the names of the units had been changed during the budget process, to Strategic Support Teams from Human Augmentation Teams, possibly explaining the confusion.

US defense officials said the formation of the spy teams was part of a broader effort to revive its human intelligence capabilities.

The new "strategic support teams" will be tailored to the specific requirements of US combatant commanders and deployed wherever there is a need for them,

said senior defense and military officials, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity.

The officials said putting members of the Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA) human intelligence service, the agency's espionage arm, in with military operators was not new.

Human intelligence

The capture of Saddam Hussein resulted from work by a DIA official who brought interrogation skills to the task but no Arabic language skills, the military official said.

"We have had Defense Humint (human intelligence) people forward with commanders all the way back to early Afghanistan," he said.

But he said that as demand mounted for people with intelligence skills, they found they were fighting a long-term war "with basically a pick-up team" while drawing on capabilities that were needed elsewhere.

So as part of an effort to strengthen human intelligence, the DIA devised the plan to form small teams that could be rotated into places where US forces were operating.

"The teams are Humint (human intelligence) teams so their focus is people who have skills as case officers, interrogators, debriefers and people that would

provide support in those skill areas," he said. They also could include analysts as well.

Bunye welcomes US support

In Malacañang, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the Philippines welcomed US support in fighting local terrorists and securing peace in Mindanao.

"The Philippines and the United States continue to uphold a strategic partnership for peace, freedom and global security based on a common fight against poverty," he said in a statement.

Bunye issued the statement after US media reports said that the Philippines had been mentioned in the early US planning as among the places where the new espionage units could be deployed.

Bunye said the United States and the Philippines "fight terror, wage peace for the cause of the people who want to walk the streets and till the fields without fear, engaging in productive enterprise to lead a dignified life."

Earnest thrusts

"The earnest thrusts of the United States are well taken and will be supported by the people," Bunye said. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, New York Times, AFP*

'I serve at the pleasure of the President'

From page A1

"He is on track in the anti-illegal logging drive," Bunye said.

Madrigal has described Defensor as the "niño bonito" (beautiful boy) of the Arroyo administration, and he may well be.

Spice Boy

Defensor, a family friend of the Arroyos, led the group of young congressmen dubbed the "Spice Boys" that spearheaded the impeachment move against President Joseph Estrada.

He was among the first to be appointed to the Cabinet—as housing czar—when Ms Arroyo became President after Edsa II in 2001.

Defensor got the coveted job of being Ms Arroyo's campaign

spokesperson during the May 2004 presidential election. Defensor, seen as a senatorial candidate in 2007, was then appointed head of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"The Filipino people have my commitment and I will resign out of delicadeza—nobody has to tell me—if I have not been doing my job and letting my guard down (against environmental violators)," the environment secretary said.

Asked how he took the apology offered to Madrigal by his own aunt, administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, the other day, he said: "That's just OK. She's my tita and she was just helping to simmer down the tension."

Unsupported claim

Santiago appealed to Madrigal to withdraw her plan to file libel

charges against her "juvenile" nephew on account of his "young age," saying the secretary displayed "reckless disregard of prudence."

The environment chief got Madrigal's ire for suggesting in media interviews over the weekend that she was in no position to criticize his campaign against illegal logging because her own family had logging interests in Aurora and Quezon, aside from owning two mining firms.

Defensor, however, failed to support his claim that the Madrigals owned logging concessions and mining companies.

No reconciliation

He just softened his combative tone to an offer of "reconciliation" to Madrigal without issuing

a formal apology.

Madrigal yesterday rejected the reconciliation overtures from the environment chief.

"I would like a genuine offer of reconciliation but not an offer of reconciliation to the media," said the senator.

"At the very moment he was calling for reconciliation (on Monday), his very own trusted men were going around in the Senate distributing in unmarked sealed white envelopes an unverified and incomplete dossier about me and my family's business interests. His very own people were intimidating my office by asking private and personal information regarding my family," she said.

Madrigal said she would file libel and other administrative charges against Defensor.

He fought Reds, plotters but quits war vs illegal loggers

From page A1

frontlines of the anti-illegal logging campaign.

"Let us just wait," he said, when asked how he would assess the progress so far of Malacañang's drive against illegal loggers.

Vision fades

President Macapagal-Arroyo last December gave Corpus the twin tasks of running after illegal loggers and overseeing a national replanting program after typhoons and landslides killed more than 1,000 people in Que-

zon, Aurora and Nueva Ecija in November and December.

Some government officials have blamed rampant illegal logging in the Sierra Madre, which abuts the three provinces, for the disasters. Some forestry experts attribute the calamities to various other factors, including the natural geologic structure of the area.

Shortly after being named by Ms Arroyo to his dual posts last month, Corpus had expressed hope he could make a difference in the campaign against illegal logging.

"It will be an all-out war. *Malalaking troso ang babanggain*

natin dito (We will be colliding with powerful people here)," Corpus said then.

He had also envisioned a "pro-people program," involving aggressive reforestation, which would provide work to mountain communities, including rebels of the communist New People's Army, who allegedly benefit from illegal logging themselves by taxing the people engaged in it.

Limited success

To date, the Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force, jointly led by Corpus and Environment Secre-

tary Michael Defensor, has had limited success in bringing culprits to justice.

Defensor has announced the filing of criminal charges against three mayors, a former congressman and a barangay captain allegedly involved in illegal cutting of trees, but opposition Sen. Jamby Madrigal challenged Defensor to go after the big fish.

Seeking to contribute to the campaign, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes yesterday urged local government officials to augment the scant number of foresters in order to protect the country's re-

maining forests.

One guard per 4,000 ha

Reyes said that at present, there was only one forest guard for every 4,000 hectares of forest.

In a directive, Reyes also asked local officials to lead in the reforestation of denuded mountains and mobilize the business community, civil society and the public to take part in the campaign.

"The disastrous aftermath of the typhoons that hit the country recently, which led to untold deaths and damage to lives and property, manifests the continuing unrestricted assault on our re-

maining forests," he said.

Reyes also urged local executives to coordinate their forest management efforts with those of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, including reporting illegal logging activities in their localities.

Only 3,000 forest rangers

The DENR has only 3,000 forest rangers to protect the country's 15 million hectares of forestland. The department says it needs at least 27,000 more forest guards to meet the ideal ratio of one forest guard per 500 hectares of forestland. *With a report from Nelson F Flores*

Joker hits 'anomalous' IPPs' VAT exemptions

From page A1

tion inside and outside Congress.

The newly signed law provides a system by which employees of revenue-collection agencies who exceed their collection targets get a share of the excess, while those who miss their targets may be fired. It is expected to raise P10 billion a year.

IPPs VAT exempt

In the Senate, administration Sen. Joker Arroyo is opposing the proposed changes in the VAT for another reason.

The senator said the proposed changes would not pass in Congress should the measure continue to exempt independent power producers (IPPs) from the VAT.

Arroyo noted that the current House amendments to the VAT law, which is now being deliberated by members of the House on the floor, did not lift the exemption of IPPs from paying the tax rate.

"Yet, IPPs are making a lot of money, making consumers pay for power they produce but which the public does not use, and the totality of the taxes they pay is a measly 3 percent of their gross sales," the senator said in a statement.

Arroyo couldn't help but ask

"what unseen hand is there that IPPs are so protected, so privileged that they cannot be touched despite the burden they give to the public."

This development was an "anomaly," said Arroyo who pointed to two other anomalies relating to the IPPs.

The first anomaly came as a result of National Power Corp.'s "notorious contracts" with the IPPs which have been "one of the biggest causes of the country's fiscal problem," he said.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago had disclosed last week that the bulk of Napocor's debt of P1.3 trillion was due to the IPPs.

Anomalous insertion

Another anomaly, Arroyo said, was when a sentence was "mysteriously inserted" in the bill approved by the bicameral conference committee in May 2001. The bill became the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira).

The sentence that was inserted in Section 6 of the Epira granted VAT zero-related privilege to IPPs, "therefore effectively making IPPs VAT-exempt," the senator said.

"Everybody pretends not to see this, but it's here in black and white. In fact, if we repeal just this one sen-

tence then they [IPPs] would no longer be exempt," he said at a press conference.

Now, Arroyo said, there were attempts to condition the minds of the public into accepting an increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent "that would hit the lower social classes most, contrary to Neda's useless, misguided and distorted analysis," Neda refers to the National Economic and Development Authority.

The American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (Amcham) said an increase in the VAT from 10 percent to 12 percent would impose a serious burden on the poor and small to medium-size enterprises, and lead to greater tax avoidance.

The government has said that an increase in VAT would raise an extra P35 billion.

Position paper

In a position paper, Amcham said: "Increased VAT rate merely translates to higher prices of goods to consumers and end-users."

"With the current minimum wage rates, it is highly doubtful if the Filipino wage earner could absorb price hikes to be triggered by the increase in VAT as well as other taxes."

"Employers likewise may not be prepared to incur additional

expenditures, particularly at this time of economic crises," the business group said.

It said small and medium-scale enterprises account for 99 percent of the total number of enterprises in the country, 68 percent of all jobs created and 60 percent of total exports.

Support from Andaya

Senator Arroyo said there was an economic proposition that says that "taxation is a tool for redistribution of wealth."

"The VAT being deliberated upon would do the opposite, the unequal imposition of taxes," Arroyo said.

The senator's proposal to scrap the VAT exemption enjoyed by IPPs has gained the support of Rep. Rolando Andaya (LP, Camarines Sur).

Andaya said IPPs should be taxed this time. "We can remove the zero-rated VAT status of IPPs. But at the same time, we can have noodles exempted," Andaya said.

Noodles and other processed food items are among the goods covered by the proposed 12-percent VAT.

In Malacañang, the President

said she was open to a compromise so the bill raising the VAT rate could pass.

"We are willing to listen to all well-meaning proposals in this direc-

tion—whether these come from administration allies, the opposition or various groups that have the interest of the people in mind," she said in a speech during the signing of the attrition law, the second of eight tax reform bills approved by Congress.

Ms Arroyo is making a strong pitch for the VAT rate hike because its enactment has polarized the public.

"There should be no divisions between pro-business or populist advocates. We must all be for one, united stable and prosperous nation," she said.

The VAT rate hike has been vigorously pushed by administration lawmakers and big business because of its huge revenue impact—P35 billion or nearly half of the President's desired revenue increase of P80 billion.

Safety nets

To ease the fears of the public, the President said her administration would ensure that an increase in the VAT rate would not lead to higher prices of basic commodities.

"From the start, we have assiduously worked with Congress to build the safety nets to cushion the impact of new taxes on the poor," she said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the economic team had been

advised of the President's position to spare the poor from the new taxes."

Bunye said the VAT system was not applied to the sale of raw farm products and fish, sale of real property used for low-cost and socialized housing, and lease of residential units of less than P8,000 per month.

While Amcham is against a VAT rate increase, an American bank is supporting it.

The clincher

In its Asia Economics Weekly, Citigroup, the world's biggest financial institution, said: "The passage of the two percent additional rate hike for VAT is crucial to creating the perception that the poor fiscal situation is about to turn the corner. Passage of the lateral attribution bill stacks up the fiscal meat; sures meant to mute fiscal risks, but the clincher would be the passage of the VAT increase."

With its potential of generating P35 billion in new revenues a year, Citigroup said "the contribution of the VAT tax proposal could be a convincing argument likely to underpin a favorable perception and enhance bond sentiment regardless of the risk of a credit rating downgrade." *With reports from Heidi Lenffer and Carlito Pablo*

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A TEACHER and a student walk past a building destroyed by fire at the Geronimo Santiago Elementary School campus in San Miguel, Manila.

ERIK ARAZAS

Ex-general, 2 Nida friends face new probe

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DEPARTMENT OF Justice (DOJ) will serve subpoenas today to former military intelligence chief Galileo Kintanar and two women close to late actress Nida Blanca as it re-opens the investigation into her murder.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said subpoenas would be issued for Kintanar, former chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; long-time Blanca aide Elena de la Paz, and Ditas San Jose de la Paz, a second cousin of Kaye Torres, Blanca's daughter.

"Based on the evidence that we have, they may be involved in this case," Gonzalez said during a press conference yesterday.

He said that a DOJ panel led by State Prosecutor Archimedes Manabat would subject them to preliminary investigation by Feb. 5.

"It does not mean that they are guilty. That is why we are conducting the preliminary investigation—to hear what

they have to say," Gonzalez said.

Government witness Rany Francisco has positively identified Elena de la Paz as the woman who, together with two men, fetched Blanca from the Atlanta Centre building hours before she was murdered, Gonzalez said.

He said Kintanar should explain his "close relationship" with accused Philip Medel and engineer Vicente "Dodong" Polinar. Gonzalez said the two men tailed Blanca a month before she was killed on Nov. 7, 2001.

He said the DOJ wanted Ditas to explain why she bought the airplane tickets of Rod Strunk, Blanca's husband and principal suspect in the case, before he left the country for the United States on Jan. 21, 2002.

Torres and her lawyer Harriet Demetriou, who were at the press conference, said they were glad about the re-opening of the case and that they had given Gonzalez a free hand in the investigation.

"My main goal is to achieve truth and justice. As (Gonzalez) said, no one will be spared," Torres said.

When asked about the alleged involvement of the two De la Pazes, Torres said it was up to the DOJ and the National Bureau of Investigation to determine that.

She said that the Dela Pazes lived with them, noting that Elena had served her mother for nearly 50 years. Torres got angry when a reporter asked if it were true that she had driven Elena out of their house.

Demetriou said Kintanar should "face the music" and explain why some of the people linked to the murder worked under him.

One of them was his helper, security guard Alfredo "Aldo" Rodriguez, who testified that he, Polinar and Medel tailed Blanca a month before her murder.

Rodriguez told investigators that Polinar bought an old Mitsubishi Gallant, which was used in the surveillance operation on Blanca. Rodriguez allegedly drove the Gallant, while Polinar and Medel tailed the actress.

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A FORTY-SEVEN-year-old public grade school in an old Manila district was partially destroyed when a two-hour fire swept through three buildings on the campus Monday evening.

While nobody was hurt in the incident, the fire, which started at 11:30 p.m., destroyed 22 classrooms at the Geronimo Santiago Elementary School on Nepomuceno Street, San Miguel.

"It spread so fast," said school principal Jesus Carag. "Our security guards and maintenance personnel detected smoke, but when they came around to investigate, the fire was already too big to control."

Arson investigators estimated that the fire destroyed classrooms inside two-story buildings and the one-floor

kindergarten building worth around P6 million.

The blaze was put out before it reached the administration offices, but only after damaging three buildings. Firefighters, who responded with 70 government and volunteer fire trucks, prevented the blaze from spreading to the principal's office, the social hall and other offices inside the administration building, and another two-story structure housing eight classrooms for Grade 2 students.

Carag said three of the school's roving personnel had just finished doing rounds of the school premises before midnight on Monday when they were alarmed by the smell of something burning behind a vacant area where old wooden desks were stored.

FO1 Lords Hernandez of the Manila Bureau of Fire Protection said they were looking into the possibility that

the storage area could have been the possible source of the fire.

She also told investigators that a head principal had warned sixth district public school principals about a threat to set fire to a school in either San Miguel, Sta. Mesa, Pandacan or Sta. Ana.

Meanwhile, more than 100 houses were razed after a fire hit a residential area at the back of the SM North mall in Quezon City yesterday afternoon.

Investigators said the fire started in one of the houses on corner Masbate and Corregidor Streets, Barangay Ramon Magsaysay located near the mall.

In Caloocan City, more than P5 million worth of raw materials and equipment for making plastics went up in smoke in a fire that razed the Wymvico Realty warehouse yesterday.

Jail-for-jaywalkers rapped

FINE, but don't arrest them.

Lawyer Ernesto Francisco yesterday asked the Supreme Court to stop the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority from detaining jaywalkers on prison buses.

He said that there was no law which provides that pedestrians may be detained or imprisoned outright for jaywalking.

Instead, Francisco said, an ap-

prehended jaywalker should be issued a traffic violation receipt or slapped the P150 penalty.

The lawyer earlier asked the court to also stop the MMDA's wet flag scheme.

Both the deployment of the prison bus and the wet flag scheme, which uses a drenched blanket, are aimed at keeping pedestrians off roads and away from accidents. Philip C. Tubeza

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METROBRIEFS

Cheap van gives thief away

THE STAREX van was too cheap at P10,000, so it aroused suspicions, leading to the arrest of Al Bermejo, 29, of Binangonan, Rizal, yesterday. Pasig City police director Sr. Supt. Raul Medina said informants got suspicious and

alerted them about Bermejo, who was trying to sell the van in Barangay Bambang. Police later discovered that the van with license plate WNT 177 was stolen from Corazon Perdigueria of Angono, Rizal.

Luiga A. del Puerto

Planning to write a book?

A SEMINAR on how to write a book will be held on Jan. 29, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. It will be conducted by the ATV

Speakers Network. For more details, please call either Alda or Josie at telephone no. 896-8790.

UST Batch 75 homecoming

THE UNIVERSITY of Sto. Tomas elementary and high school Batch '75 will be celebrating their Pearl Homecoming today and on Jan. 28 at the UST Benavidez Circle and

at the Makati Shangri-La. For information, contact Pinky Abad at 0918-5819918 or Junille Rayos at 0922-8101990.

Batong Buhay Masons new officers

THE BATONG Buhay Lodge No. 27 of free and accepted masons will hold its installation of officers for Masonic year A.L. 6005 on Jan. 29, at 4 p.m. at the Jacobo Zobel y Zangroniz Masonic Temple on Sacred Heart St., San Antonio Village, Makati City. Heading the officers to be installed by VW Jaunilo B. Vafio Jr. are Marni C. Marcos Jr. Worship Master; Gerardo B. Lantoria, Senior Warden; and Eduardo S. Alcaraz, Junior Warden; Alexander C. Costales, John B. Ljamas,

Jovencio M. Ramirez, Jovencio E. Reyes, Keith Ernald L. Singlan, Raymond M. Noble, Oscar C. Hipolito, Tho F. Garcia, Oscar U. Obias, Reinaldo A. Cedeño, Juanito C. Tan, Alexander T. Casas and Antonio M. San Luis Jr. Bro. Reynaldo F. Vanilla, PNP chief superintendent, is the keynote speaker, while Chaplain Jovencia E. Reyes will deliver the invocation. WB Keith Ernald L. Singlan will give the welcome remarks with VW Antonio M. San Luis Jr. as the master of ceremonies.

Ferry run returns to Metro

By Margaux C. Ortiz

METRO Manila commuters will soon have an alternative to taking the bus, jeepney or taxi with the revival of the Pasig River ferry service.

"The government has decided to push through with the project," said Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, who also co-chairs the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC).

Fernando said the PRRC, MM-DA and Department of Transportation and Communication will be signing a memorandum of agreement today to establish the interrelationship of agencies that would be involved in the ferry service revival. Twelve companies have expressed interest in the project's operations, he added.

Magsaysay Lines and Starcraft Ferry Corp., former operators of the Pasig ferry line, ceased operations because of the river's foul odor and dirty waters, Fernando said, adding that Starcraft also ran into financial and management problems.

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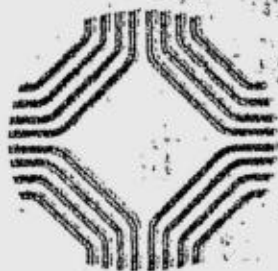
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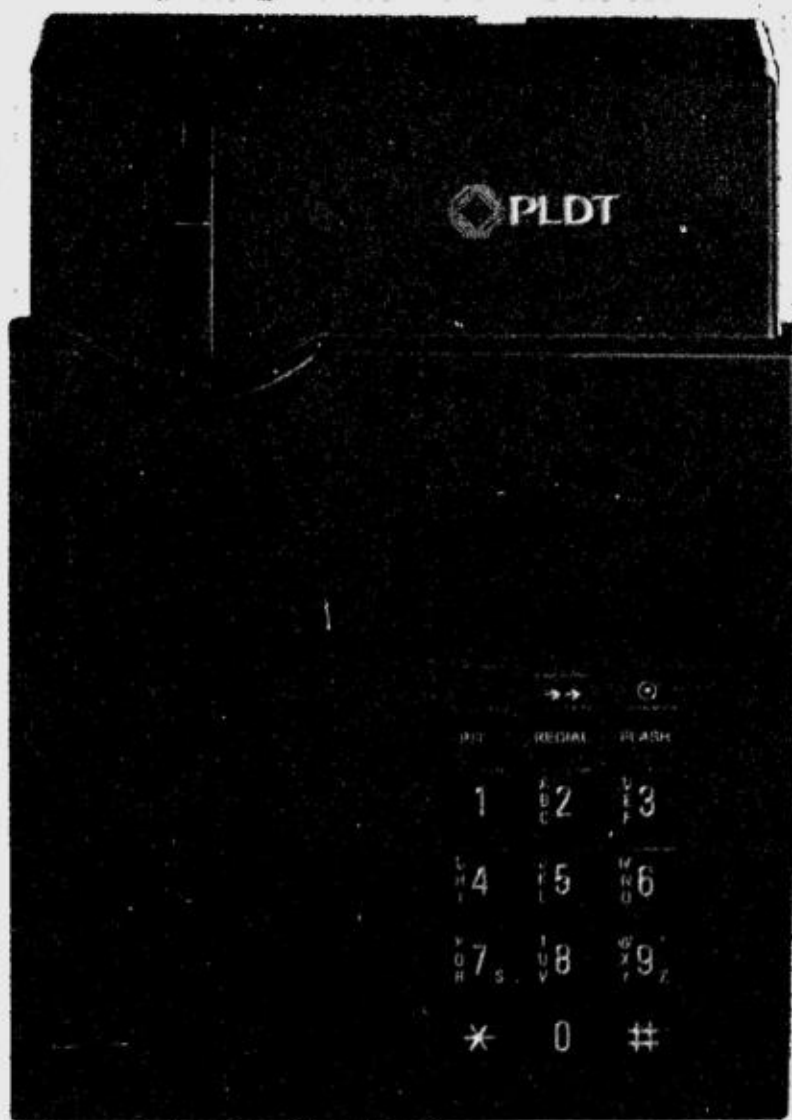
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5. Promo period is from January 10, 2005 to May 10, 2005. Deadline for submission of referrals with complete required documents is on May 10, 2005, 5:00pm.

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9. Standard policies of PLDT on Credit and Collection shall apply. PLDT reserves the right to disqualify any Goldmine Agent from the Program if any violation is committed on existing policies on subscription, credit and collection and/or commit acts of fraud.

See flyers for details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3165, Series of 2004.



WARREN Ybanez (left) of Magnolia passes off to Arwind Santos under pressure from Welcoat's Eugene Tan during their game yesterday.

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Montaña five gains finals

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE MONTAÑA Jewels are in the finals for the first time in seven long years and coach Robert Sison knows it isn't because of just one or two players.

"It was a total team effort," said Sison after the Jewels swept the Granny Goose Tortillos, 67-63, yesterday in the semifinals of the PBL Open Championship at the Makati Coliseum. "My key players stepped up in this game. They responded to my call and I'm so proud of them."

GAMES THURSDAY
(Makati Coliseum)
3:30 p.m.—Welcoat
vs Magnolia-FEU

Veterans Jon Dan Salvador, Al Vergara and Alex Compton led Montaña's charge in the fourth quarter to subdue the Tortillos.

Montaña will dispute the crown against the winner of the other series between Welcoat and Magnolia-FEU on Thursday.

Welcoat held Magnolia-FEU to just two points in the last four minutes in the other game and forced a do-or-die showdown with a 69-64 victory.

"The team's morale is different after I told them that it's not impossible to win against Magnolia two in a row," said coach Caloy Garcia, whose charges snapped the Wizards' 10-game winning run.

Compton and Vergara helped the Jewels to a 63-55 lead going into the last two minutes, but Dennis Concha rallied the Tortillos to within 65-63. The Tortillos had a chance to force overtime, but Abby Santos missed an underdog stab, two ticks left.

The scores:

First Game

WELCOAT 69—Washington 17, Ortiguerra 14, Sta. Maria 14, Reyes 9, Tolomia 7, Tan 3, Najorda 3, Dy 2, Estrada 0, Gamboa 0.

MAGNOLIA-FEU 64—Santos 19, Misolas 12, Isip 7, Ybanez 6, Rafines 6, Chan 4, Jones 3, Rizada 3, Calt 2, Miranda 2, Co 0, Razon 0.

Quarters: 20-21, 40-35, 53-50, 69-64

Second Game

MONTANA 67—Salvador 16, Vergara 16, Compton 13, Mercado 4, Dela Cuesta 4, Juntilla 4, Guerrero 3, Baguion 2, Espiritu 1, Capus 0.

GRANNY GOOSE 63—Concha 11, Latonio 11, Quiñahan 9, Cruz 9, Ibañez 8, Lanete 4, Capati 4, Almeida 2, Grijaldo 2, David 2, A. Santos 1, V. Santos 0.

Quarters: 13-18, 39-33, 46-47, 67-63.

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POC seeks AFP help; NBN-4 picked

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE COUNTRY'S top sports officials are to undertake key measures to deflect money and training time problems currently hounding this year's hosting of the Southeast Asian Games.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco will ask the armed forces and the national police to allow enlisted athletes to go on "detached service" to afford them unhindered training for the biennial meet.

Meanwhile, Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) chair Obet Pagdanganan named NBN-4 the main broadcast car-

rier of the Games, but added that the government-owned station will supply other local channels and foreign networks with live feeds.

Pagdanganan said the Philsoc is also looking into the possibility of borrowing competition equipment from Vietnam, the last host of the Games.

At least two national boxing coaches complained that their training schedule was disrupted when they were made to report to their military units to "man the barracks" and do utility work.

"We will talk to (Defense) Secretary (Avelino) Nong Cruz regarding the matter and see how we can move their schedule in accordance with our program," said Cojuangco.

Philippine Sports Commission officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez said most of the 600 Class A and Class B athletes are currently serving in the military and police.

Go Teng Kok of athletics and chess offered a radical solution and ordered his athletes to resign from service if it starts getting in the way of their training. He said his association will match their salaries if that happens.

Ramirez, who with Cojuangco presented athletes advocate Lydia de Vega-Mercado to the media, announced that he has allotted P4.5 million for the complete uniforms of the athletes and an additional P2.5 million for their beddings.

PSC tossers nip Lady Pirates, secure 3rd spot

By Musong R. Castillo

THE PSC Lady Legends needed five sets to subdue a hard-fighting Lyceum side and assure themselves of the third ranking in the Shakey's V-League.

Amelia Guanco and Rosemarie Prochina hit the telling shots in the last three sets as the Legends regrouped for a 28-26, 19-25, 23-25, 25-20, 15-13 victory over the Lady Pirates in more than two hours at the Rizal Coliseum.

Prochina scattered 26 points and Guanco chipped in 23 as the Legends took the Lady Pirates out of their miseries with their seventh win in 11 games.

Lyceum dropped to 4-7 and formally bowed out, giving Letran a free ride to the Final Four opposite

either defending champion Santo Tomas or La Salle.

PSC now has the luxury of choosing its semifinal opponent when it battles the Lady Archers at the close of the eliminations on Sunday.

A win by the Legends would put them in a best-of-three series with La Salle, while a loss would give the Lady Archers No. 1 seeding by virtue of a higher quotient over Santo Tomas.

As things stand, Santo Tomas will lose out in the tiebreak should it end up tied with La Salle for No. 1, having dropped 12 sets to La Salle's nine.

Lyceum played inspired ball all game long, and looked poised to stay alive after going 2-1 up with a masterful display of precision offense in the third set.

SMB goes for clincher vs Ginebra

SAN MIGUEL Beer, feeling it will be tough to beat Barangay Ginebra in a sudden-death game, goes for the clincher against its sister team today in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup best-of-five semifinal series at the Araneta Coliseum.

"If they (Gin Kings) tie the series, we will have a hard time beating them in a do-or-die situation," acknowledged San Miguel ace playmaker Olsen Racela after the Beermen grabbed a 2-1 lead following a 96-91 victory Sunday night.

The Beermen took Game 3 despite Danny Seigle, who averaged 35.5 points per game in Games 1 and 2, scoring just 14 points. Racela and Dondon Montiveros took over the scoring picture for the crucial victory.

GAME TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
7:10 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs San Miguel Beer.
(Game 4, best-of-five)

"It's a team game," explained Racela. "We should match the same collective effort in Game 3 if we want to advance. We have to motivate everybody again to come out as if there's no tomorrow."

A victory tonight will set the Beermen up for a best-of-seven championship showdown with the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals beginning Friday. The Phone Pals applied the broom on the Shell Turbochargers in the other semifinal series.

Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen



COURT GENERAL: Racela is the man to watch tonight. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

hopes to stave off elimination by trying to control the tempo in Game 4.

"You can only adjust so much," said Tanquingcen. "It's a matter of controlling the tempo and making them play our way."

The Beermen also got solid performances from Dorian Peña, Danny Idefonso and Nic Belasco, but coach Jong Uichico believes Racela will be a key factor tonight.

"Olsen is the leader of the team," said Uichico. "He gets the team together and it's hard to find a point guard like him. He's capable of directing the players and they'll follow whatever he says."

"In fact, I give him the license to run any play that he feels best for the team. He sees what's happening on the floor, so I leave it up to him."

June Navarro

Tambunting powers DLSZ sweep

JUSTIN Tambunting powered De La Salle-Zobel to a mighty sweep of the overall titles in boys' play even as Ateneo clinched three division plums in the fourth Samsung Interscholastics golf championships which ended Monday at the Tagaytay Midlands Golf and Country Club course.

Tambunting fired six birdies en route to 35 Stableford points for the second straight day and won the overall individual title in a solid effort that carried De La Salle-Zobel to its second overall crown in four editions of the country's biggest inter-school competition.

Tambunting, Miko Alejandro, CJ Sembrano, Yannick Tuazon and Hank Medina pooled 248 in three days, nine better than the winning score of

Ateneo in the boys' college category.

Ateneo also cornered the combined girls-high school and boys elementary diadems to become the winningest team in the tournament.

Katrina Gonzalez, Riva Galvez-Tan, Claudine Chan and Olivia Lara Santico took the college-high school team trophy after beating Miriam by just six points while Marcel Puyat, Moshe Baldo, Bino dela Paz, Carlo Legaspi and RJ Banzon overpowered the opposition in boys' elementary.

Paulina Sotto, Andie Unson and Nicole Martinez bagged the girls elementary title for Poveda with St. Paul-Pasig, led by Beverly Mendoza, coming in second and Miriam third.

Mendoza copped her second straight title, af-

ter topping Class B of the recent RP Ladies Open, when she nipped Sotto with a par on the second extra hole of a sudden-death playoff for the girls' elementary individual title.

Siblings Crystal and Wolen Superal joined Mendoza and Tambunting in the roster of winners that also included Oliver Gan of La Salle and Remo Fueg of European International School.

Crystal, playing out of Las Piñas High, topped the college-high school play with 94 points.

Golden Acres bet Wolen prevailed over Puyat in the boys' elementary; Gan won the boys' college plum where he outpointed Tan, 86-83, and Fueg held off the challenge of a younger JR Gonzales for the boys' special division.

De La Salle-Lipa, CSA share Milo BEST volleyball lead

DE LA Salle-Lipa and Colegio San Agustin brushed aside their respective rivals to share the elementary (competitive) division lead in the 10th Milo BEST Women's Volleyball League (WVL) last weekend at the Ateneo Grade School courts in Quezon City. DLS-Lipa spilled JASMS, 25-14, 25-12, while CSA whipped San Beda-Alabang, 25-18, 25-17. Dominican School won twice while Poveda Learning Center triumphed once to show the way in the elementary (developmental) level with identical 3-0 records. Dominican ripped Baesa Adventist School, 25-9, 25-10, and New Era University, 25-12, 25-12, while Poveda toppled Assumption College, 25-20, 25-14. Other results: Elementary (developmental)—Miriam d. New Era, 25-15, 25-17 and St. Scholastica, 25-19, 27-25; St. Scholastica d. Assumption, 25-12, 25-17.

Cantada, Tanpinco ready for title defense

GERARD Cantada and his amateur partner JR Tanpinco are all set to defend their crown in the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am on Feb. 9-12 at Riviera's Langer in Silang, Cavite.

"We are in the thick of preparation for the defense of our title," Cantada said.

The duo prevailed in the third staging of the tournament when it was still called the U-Bix Riviera National Pro-Am behind the partnership of U-Bix head Bert Bravo and Riviera president

Commodore Danny Pizarro.

U-Bix has allied with Japan's printer leader Konica Minolta this year to present the richest Pro-Am at Riviera—a whopping P1.5 million in total prize money for the top 30 finishers.

"This is a great alliance between U-Bix and Konica Minolta since it will signal the beginning of a healthy relationship that should augur well for possibly bigger pots in the future," said Bravo, who initiated the revival of the pro-am.

The event, featuring the country's Top 30 pros paired with amateurs with indices of 5 and below, is supported by Riso, Epson, Brother Office, Casio, Okamura, Planex Network, ServiceMaster, Terminix, Merry Maids, Grappa's Ristorante, Caffè Appassionato, Pivo Praha, WineMaster and Bravo Golf.

The Celebrity Tournament is set Feb. 8. For inquiries, call the NGAP at 525-6987, 524-5160 or Riviera at 888-9127, 046-2868, 046-414-2837.

Arroyo, Pagcor, SMC back caddies' tilt

THE NOBLE mission of the National Caddies' Open has drawn major backers in the First Gentleman Foundation, Pagcor through its chair Efrén Genuino and San Miguel Corp. through former ambassador Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

Tournament co-chair Ben Abalos said First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and Genuino have agreed to make their respective organizations the main presenters of the event that tees off next week.

"The First Gentleman, Mr. Genuino and Ambassador Cojuangco see the nobility of this undertaking," Abalos said.



FROM left: Arroyo, Cojuangco, Genuino.

"They are supporting not only the tournament, but also our program."

The Calatagan, Canlubang North and Wack Wack East layouts have already been spruced up for the 72-hole event that runs from Feb. 1 to 4.

"The organization (NCO) is also grateful to Calatagan, Canlubang and Wack Wack for their generous gestures of letting us use their respective courses," said co-chair Hermie Esguerra, also the chair and CEO of the Herma Group.

More than 100 entries made the registration deadline last week. The organizing Philippine Amateur Golf Development Foundation is requesting all participants to be in Manila by Jan. 30.

Arroyo, Genuino and Cojuangco have been invited to hit the ceremonial drives at 10 a.m.

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Federer, Safin set semis showdown

MELBOURNE, Australia—Agassi was good. Federer was much better.

In a matchup worthy of a final, defending champion Roger Federer was at his graceful and relentless best under pressure to simply outclass four-time winner Andre Agassi, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4, Tuesday and advance to the semifinals of the Australian Open.

Top-ranked Federer extended his winning streak to 26 matches with stinging winners from the baseline, crisp volleys and 22 aces.

Meanwhile, playing under a broiling sun that led tournament officials to close the roofs on the two shows a couple of hours after their matches, fourth-seeded Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova and No. 7 Serena Williams won Tuesday to set up a semifinal meeting at the Australian Open. It will be a rematch of last year's Wimbledon final, when the 17-year-old Sharapova won her first Grand



FURNACE-LIKE playing conditions make Maria Sharapova feel like she needs a wheelchair.

REUTERS

Slam title

"I need a wheelchair right now," Sharapova said after beating US Open winner Svetlana Kuznetsova, 4-6, 6-2, 6-2. "It was so hot."

Marat Safin, who lost to Federer in last year's final after six grueling matches that took more than 18 hours, needed only 1 1/2 hours to beat No. 20 Dominik Hrbaty 6-2, 6-4, 6-2.

Safin, who got a break when organizers closed the retractable roof because of the heat, takes his shot at Federer in the semifinals.

Williams defeated No. 2 Amelie Mauresmo, 6-2, 6-2. **AP**

Sixers cool Heat

PHILADELPHIA—Allen Iverson had 45 points and 11 assists, leading the Philadelphia 76ers to a 106-98 victory over the Miami Heat on Monday night.

Samuel Dalembert added 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Sixers in a matchup of Eastern Conference division leaders.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 24 points and Dwyane Wade had 17 points.

and 11 assists for the Heat, who were coming off a 29-point win the night before against New Orleans.

In Atlanta, the Bulls went over .500 for the first time in over two years with a 107-82 rout of the Hawks. **AP**

COMPLETE RESULTS: Washington 106, Cleveland 97; Minnesota 86, Detroit 83; Houston 89, Orlando 78; Portland 107, San Antonio 99; LA Clippers 97, Dallas 87

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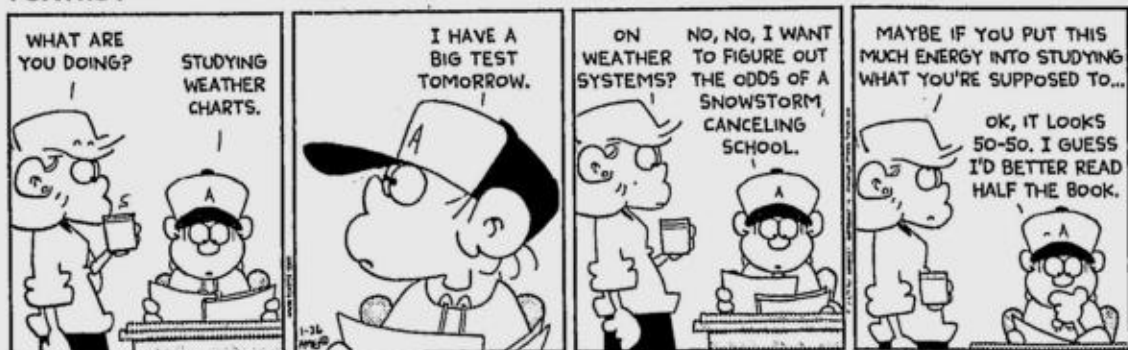
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DIVINE COMEDY



BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You believe in yourself. This confidence allows you to be proactive about whatever you believe in. You don't sit on the fence. Sometimes you are controversial. (But you don't seek this out.) Your determination to reach your goals is limitless. You plan ahead. The year ahead has more solitude in order to learn something important.

Birthdate of: Ellen DeGeneres, comedian/actress; Wayne Gretzky, hockey player/coach

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You love working with your hands. In particular, you love doing something for the first time. Today is a great day to try out something new and artistic.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You like to share ideas. Because you have a curious mind, you also love to learn new things. Buy a book or magazine that appeals to you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): The Moon is in your sign today. This makes you more emotional, dramatic and theatrical. You're getting ready for very big changes in your life.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Focus your energy on home and family today. Somebody needs to talk to you. Why not make a call to a family member you haven't talked to for a while?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a good day to go over finances and get in touch with your bank account. How much money do you owe? How much money is coming in?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You need to have some solitude today, even if it's just half an hour. Take some time for a cup of coffee or a walk, so that you can collect your thoughts and pull yourself together.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Conversations with female friends will be interesting today. Perhaps you need to discuss something that is troubling you. It might concern a sibling or relative.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You will be noticed or in the public eye in some way. Think about what you're saying, because others are listening. They might even quote you!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You want to do something different today—something out of the ordinary. Why not go someplace you have never been before?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): In order to get along with someone right now, you have to appreciate his or her value system. Try to see things from someone else's point of view. (Walk a mile in this person's wedgies.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today's Moon opposes your sign. This means you have to go more than halfway when dealing with others. You might think someone opposes you, but probably this is not the case.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Any effort you make to tidy up or organize your world will be productive! Put forth that extra effort, because you will love yourself for it later.

MIKROKOSMOS



BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN



BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE



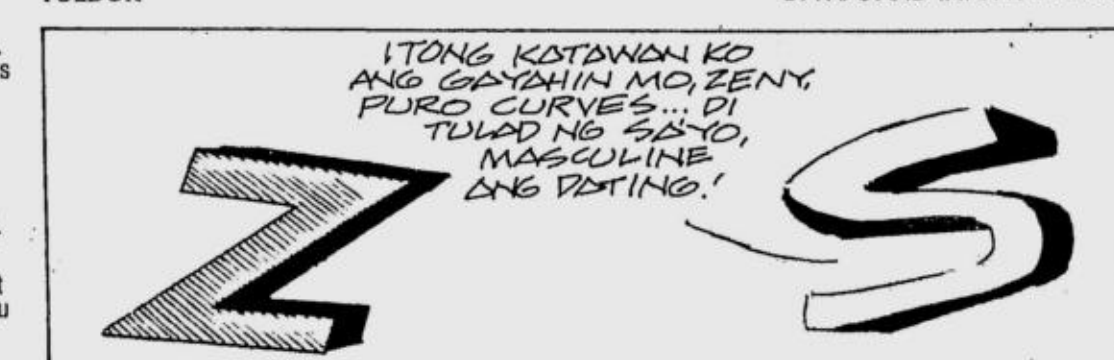
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LOVEKNOTS



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TULDOK



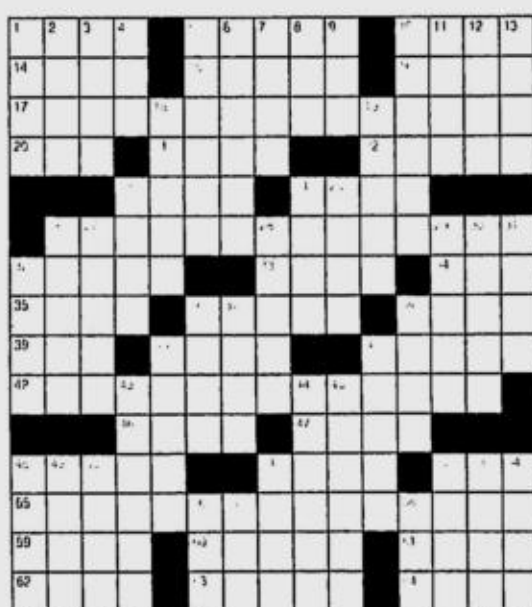
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Type of pasta
- 5 Video-game company
- 10 Insolence
- 14 Asian sea
- 15 Hunger strikes
- 16 Polypore
- 17 Elite group
- 20 Booming jet, for short
- 21 Commend
- 22 Avignon's river
- 23 Beach, FL
- 24 H.H. Munro
- 26 Elite group
- 32 Luster
- 33 Woodwind piece
- 34 Thurman of film
- 35 Successful shots
- 36 Spectrum producer
- 38 Skier's lift
- 39 In the style of
- 40 Baba and MacGraw
- 41 Couples
- 42 Elite group
- 46 Delfness
- 47 Nevada resort
- 48 Egypt's Anwar
- 51 Morales of "N.Y.P.D. Blue"
- 52 French coin
- 55 Elite group
- 59 One of Central Park's 840
- 60 Notational sign in music
- 61 If all falls...
- 62 Tongue-clicking sounds
- 63 Remove stitches
- 64 Burn slightly

- DOWN**
- 1 Uses a laser weapon
 - 2 Tennisase flower
 - 3 Diplomacy
 - 4 Sort or kind
 - 5 Declare
 - 6 Body art
 - 7 Tennis great
 - 8 Numbered hwy.

By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

1/26/05

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

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- 9 Small pc. of land
- 10 Grotesque genre of fiction
- 11 Choir member
- 12 Property claim
- 13 Handed-down history
- 18 Vast expanse
- 19 Gallied
- 23 Geese formations
- 24 Fr. rel. figures
- 25 Attention getter
- 26 Red pepper pod
- 27 Mark new prices
- 28 Pat down
- 29 Toy-cube inventor
- 30 Bradley and Epps
- 31 Golf standards
- 32 Persian ruler
- 36 Also
- 37 Oriental staple
- 38 Tex-Mex snack
- 40 Violin maker of note
- 41 Carthaginian
- 43 Lifts
- 44 "Lupin"
- 45 Pasture
- 48 Quarrel
- 49 Circle parts
- 50 Actor Bogarde
- 51 Scrambled order
- 52 Mall event
- 53 Pelion's partner
- 54 Manipulator
- 56 Fighting Tigers of the NCAA
- 57 Poetic contraction
- 58 Bandleader

ENTERTAINMENT

Broadcast journalists' work critiqued

RECENTLY, we summed up CNN and BBC broadcast journalists' points of self-evaluation and criticism related to their TV outfits' coverage of the recent Asian tsunami disaster.

pressed viewers with their genuine lack of concern about how they looked, or even about their safety.

Also, they didn't focus exclusively on mawkishly melodra-

matic stories of rescue or loss, but worked hard to come up with helpful back-grounders and up-dates.

They knew that their coverage would

be most useful if it warned viewers about future developments, and galvanized relief workers' efforts to help people in distress by guiding them to the fastest and most

accessible routes.

Finally, they helped make sure that similar disasters in the future would be less tragic by under-scoring the lessons

BROADCAST/A28

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

What about Filipino TV people? How well did they handle a similar local event, the floods and landslides in Central Luzon late last year?

Some of the criticisms raised against the broadcast journalists abroad also apply to our own people: the tendency to focus on suffering, intruding into the grief of relatives of victims, squeezing scenes of personal tragedy for all the melodrama they can muster, etc.

Lack of training

In addition, some local TV people's lack of training and technical knowledge was too obvious to be ignored. To cover up, they focused on individual stories, and were thus unable to give viewers the big picture.

They also tended to take officials at their word, and didn't seem to know enough about the situation to go beyond the standard bland assurance and motherhood avowals of rescue and relief.

They were also unable to keep some officials from exploiting the TV moment for the self-promotional advantages they offered.

Other glaringly off-putting TV images during the floods included reporters intentionally standing in the rain to come off as brave exponents of heroic public service; TV personalities very visibly handing out relief goods instead of doing their job by staying on top of the breaking story; reporters unable to say much other than the lead-in news spiels they read, and so-called news analysts unable to really get a helpful analytical handle on the unfolding disaster and its complex ramifications.

These and other visual glitches revealed how thin the TV networks' news benches are, and how insufficient is the training that some broadcast news personnel are given.

Too gussied up

In addition, the on-camera news people's lack of proper focus and correct priorities made itself embarrassingly clear. Instead of concentrating on the news, some of them came across as self-absorbed, and too glamorously dressed and gussied up for the grim disaster they were covering.

In contrast, it was such a delight to see TV news people with the right background and attitude doing so well, despite the dangers and obstacles involved. They im-

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Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Binan)	10000	411-1146	SO HAPPY TOGETHER	1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta)	10000	568-6771	SO HAPPY TOGETHER	1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac)	10000	982-1729	LAST KISS	1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Pinarol)	10000	795-3320	KUNG FU HUSTLE	1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
Lianas MovieCity (Calamba)	10000	545-7202	WHITE NOISE	1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
Mega Center Mall (Cabanatuan City)	10000	463-3283	MANO PO	1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
Fiesta World Mall (Lipa)	10000	981-0790	BUKAS MAY UMAGA	1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan)	10000	237-7007	SO HAPPY TOGETHER	1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
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3 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE	3 MEET THE FOCKERS	3 OCEAN'S 12	3 ELEKTRA	3 SUPER BABIES: BABY GENIUSES 2
4 OCEAN'S 12	4 KUNG FU HUSTLE	4 OCEAN'S 12	4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE	4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE	5 KUNG FU HUSTLE	5 ELEKTRA	5 OCEAN'S 12	5

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ALABANG TOWN CENTER Cinema 1 - 1:25 pm, 3:10 pm, 5:15 pm, 7:20 pm, 9:15 pm	GREENBELT 3 Cinema 2 - 1:25 pm, 3:10 pm, 5:15 pm, 7:20 pm, 9:15 pm
GLORIETTA 1 Cinema 2 - 1:25 pm, 3:10 pm, 5:15 pm, 7:20 pm, 9:15 pm	MARKET MARKET Cinema 1 - 1:25 pm, 3:10 pm, 5:15 pm, 7:20 pm, 9:15 pm
GLORIETTA 4 Cinema 1 - 1:25 pm, 3:10 pm, 5:15 pm, 7:20 pm, 9:15 pm	

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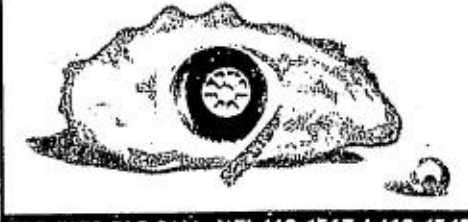
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12:30 pm - 3 pm	MAGNIFICO by Marjo J. de los Reyes with short film ANAK MAYNILA	MAGNIFICO by Marjo J. de los Reyes with short film ANAK MAYNILA	MAGNIFICO by Marjo J. de los Reyes with short film ANAK MAYNILA
3 pm - 6:30 pm	MATUD NILA by Ben Lacey with short film ANAK MAYNILA	MAVOR ANDAL by Jose Macas with short film ANAK MAYNILA	CEBUANO DIGITAL WORKS
6:30 pm - 8 pm	RECOGNITION NIGHT with excerpts from DADILIS SA KINABUHAY	MANOK NI SAN PEDRO by Jose Macas with short film ANAK MAYNILA	RILES by Brian Corcoran
8 pm - 10:30 pm	PANAGHOY SA SUBA by Cesar Montano with short film THE LAST FISH IN THE WORLD	BAHAG NO, MAHAL KO by Radial Network Bago 2 BAGLOLO "PIYAYA" VIDEOS	RED SAGA by Radial Network Bago 2 BAGLOLO "PIYAYA" VIDEOS

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'OUIJA Board'
Broadcast
journalists'
work
critiqued

From page A27
that could be learned
from this experience.
Unfortunately, the
majority of our TV
news people couldn't
measure up to this
admirable profession-
al standard. Which
only goes to show
that a lot needs to be
done to re-orient
them before the next
disaster strikes.

**On Cartoon
Network**

FEBRUARY treats on
Cartoon Network
new series and
shows: Feb. 5, "Pow-
er Rangers Ninja
Storm," premieres
weekends at 7:30
a.m. Three friends
living in the near fu-
ture study the art of
the ninja and become
Rangers after their
Ninja Academy is at-
tacked and destroyed
by the evil Lothor and
his space alien
ninjas.

Feb. 7, weekdays
at noon, "The Yogi
Bear Show." Catch
the hijinks and comi-
cal adventures of Yo-
gi and his best friend
Boo-Boo as they try
to outsmart ranger
Jones.

Feb. 14, M-W-F at
11 a.m., "Care Bears."
You are invited into
the world of adorable
furry friends, each
with his own special
caring mission.

Feb. 21, weekdays
at 7 a.m., "Shaman
King." Follow the ad-
ventures of a young
shaman who is gifted
with the ability to
communicate with
the world of gods and
spirits.

'Ouija Board'
AHN BHUNG-KI's
horror film, "Ouija
Board," is about a
schoolgirl who's tor-
mented by her class-
mates. In a desperate
attempt to escape,
and to get back at her
tormentors, she
chants an incantation
that is supposed to
facilitate communi-
cation with an evil
spirit. The next day,
her nasty classmates
begin to die. Yikes!

**DID
YOU
KNOW...**

DIAMOND Star
Maricel Soriano
said she gave the
nickname "Kulit"
to William Mar-
tinez, her ex-boy-
friend and movie
partner, because
he was always
teasing her. Mar-
ya said that al-
though they used
to quarrel over
petty things, they
have remained
close friends long
after their on-
screen pairing
ended in the late
'80s.

Featuring the voices of:
Mandy MOORE
Dustin HOFFMAN
David SPADE
Whoopi GOLDBERG
Frankie MUIZ
Joe Pantoliano
Joe Foxworthy
Doug Harvey

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Misery loves family.

OPENS FEB. 2
WHEN BAD BOYS TURNED HEROES

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13**
ETHAN HAWKE
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OPENS TODAY
MTRCB RATING
R-13

School for Seduction

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one becomes one

KELLY BROOK • EMILY WOOF • DERVLA KIRWAN • MARGI CLARKE
JESSICA JOHNSON • NEIL STUKE AND TIM HEALY

ENTERTAINMENT

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Former fat kid is new 'Kilabot'

'I would like to earn a title that hasn't been used before'

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

RAYMOND Manalo, who placed second to Rachele Ann Go in the singing contest "Search for a Star" last year, still gets self-conscious whenever he watches himself in the music video of his single "Kung Alam Ko Lang."

"You see," explained the 21-year-old from Pampanga, "I used to be fat. I had

a really big belly. The first thing that Viva told me to do after the contest was to trim down. So I went on a no-rice diet. I also bought dumbbells but I wasn't able to use them."

Now, there's no longer a trace of his former overweight self, but Raymond remains the simple and unaffected boy from Angeles City.

And the Viva entertainment group, which manages his career as well as

that of Rachele, is trying to pass off the former fat kid as a singing heartthrob.

"Viva calls me 'Kilabot ng mga Kolehiyala,'" said Raymond, and laughed, "but I don't know..."

The tag was first conferred on Hajji Alejandro during the '70s and was inherited by Ariel Rivera two decades later. Blessed with a matinee idol's looks and a crooner's smooth voice, Raymond could indeed be next in line.

But he pointed out that although most male singers these days sing ballads, each has his own unique voice quality and style. "I consider myself a sentimental balladeer and I would like to earn a title that hasn't been used before," he said.

Raymond said he, like Hajji and Ariel, would also like to have immortal hits to his name. His 12-track debut CD, "Faithfully," features both remakes and



RAYMOND would rather be known for hit songs.

original compositions. He also has a duet with fellow Viva talent and "Search for a Star" semifinalist, Jayanne, called "You and I (Have Traveled Far Together)," a hit from the '60s.

The carrier single is "Kung Alam Ko Lang," recorded by Toni Daya in the '80s.

Raymond said he doesn't mind Rachele's being identified with other singers since he and she are not a love team anyway, unlike Sarah Geronimo and Mark Bautista, champion and first runner-up of "Star for a Night."

"Star for a Night" was aired on Channel 13 and "Search for a Star" on Channel 7. Both contests were hosted by Regine Velasquez and produced by the Viva entertainment group that now manages the careers of all four winners. Sarah and Mark starred in the defunct afternoon soap, "Sarah, the Teen Princess" and in the recent Metro Manila Film Festival entry, "Lastikman." They've also headlined several concerts that also included Rachele and Raymond.

Rachele has also been linked to Mark and to "Star in a Million" champ Erik Santos and finalist Christian Bautista, who was said to have spent New Year's Eve with Rachele at the Go family residence.

"We'd rather focus on our individual careers," said Raymond in Filipino during the launch of "Faithfully."

"Rachele has already made it while I'm still trying to break into the industry," he added. "I have to work harder but I know that in the end, success will be sweeter because I rely only on my own hard work."

He explained to INQUIRER Entertainment that the setup is beneficial to both him and Rachele. "If we work only with each other, people might get tired of us," he said.

Rachele wasn't around to lend support during the launch of his album, Raymond insisted that the friendship they started during "Search for a Star" still stands. "If she's free, she comes to my mall tours," he said. "She also advises me not to mind the crowd during performances and to just give my best. She reminds me that the audience pay good money to see me perform and they deserve nothing less."

For family's sake

Raymond is the eldest and only boy in the brood of three. His father is a jeepney driver, his mother a public school teacher who also runs a small store at their home. He said he might have gotten the gift of music from his father who, along with his brothers, used to be a hit in *harana* (serenades).

Raymond began his musical journey as a member of several choirs and glee clubs. A few years ago, he joined a band called DNA that failed to take off. He concentrated instead on earning a degree in Finance, but music came beckoning again. He decided to audition for "Search for a Star," but in Manila and not in his hometown.

"I got shy because a lot of people know me in Angeles," he recalled.

"My parents work so hard and I want to give them some comforts in life," he said. "I also plan to build a house for all of us."

"My wish now is for my album to turn gold," he added, crossing his fingers.



JAYANNE sings a duet with Raymond in new CD.

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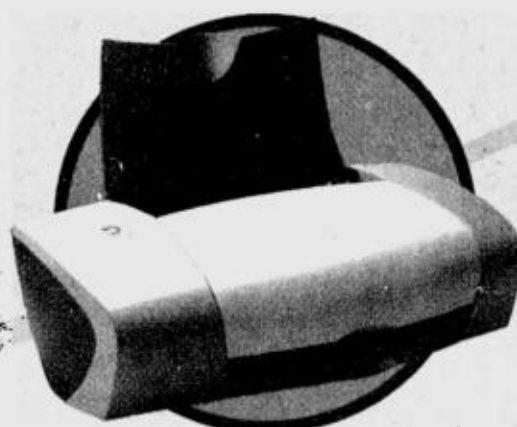
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Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

US excludes RP from \$1.5-B aid list

By Michelle V. Remo

THE UNITED STATES government has excluded the Philippines from the list of countries eligible for a \$1.5-billion international aid, which is being administered by Millennium Challenge Corp. (MCC), citing underperformance in fighting corruption and easing its fiscal woes.

Clay Lowery, MCC vice president for market assessment, said the American state-owned corporation decided to put the Philippines only under the threshold status because the country failed to sufficiently address its problems on corruption and un-

healthy fiscal standing.

A country under the threshold status is one that does not qualify for the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), the US grant given to selected poor countries, but may eventually qualify if appropriate policy reforms are implemented.

The MCA, according to the US government, is given to poor countries that are "ruling justly," "investing in their people," and "encouraging economic freedom."

For 2005, the US government has allotted \$1.5 billion for the MCA. Ninety percent of the amount will be automatically given to the eligible countries to fund various anti-poverty projects, while the remaining 10 percent will be given to countries that will be selected from the list of "threshold" countries.

The Philippines is given until

March 15 to submit project or program proposals that may be funded by the MCA, and to defend why it should qualify for the international aid.

Countries that made it to the eligible list are: Morocco, Armenia, Benin, Bolivia, Georgia, Ghana, Honduras, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Senegal, Sri Lanka, and Vanuatu.

On the other hand, countries that only made it to the threshold status, aside from the Philippines, are Burkina Faso, Guyana,

Malawi, Paraguay, and Zambia.

"Corruption and its macroeconomic policies are still the issues confronting the Philippines," Lowery said in a press briefing.

Earlier, the Asian Development Bank said in a study that the Philippines' tax structure contained loopholes that encouraged corruption and tax evasion. It said that corporate taxpayers in the Philippines, on the average, declared only 77 percent of their revenue, therefore evading paying proper taxes.

The ADB also cited the Global

Competitiveness Report for 2003 and 2004, which said the Philippines ranked as the sixth worst performer, among 102 countries, in the area of tax collection due to delinquency and bribery.

The Philippines' pressing fiscal problem, characterized by a yawning budget deficit and burgeoning debt, was the reason it suffered from a credit-rating downgrade by international ratings firm Standard & Poor's. The rating agency downgraded the Philippines foreign current debt

US/B3

Peso hits new high of 55.35:\$1

THE PESO yesterday closed at a new year-high of 55.35 to \$1 as calls from more European leaders for Asian central banks to let their currencies rise further fueled bullish sentiment in the region.

The local currency continued to firm up even as the US dollar regained some lost ground against the yen and the euro ahead of the release of the latest US growth data, the general elections in Iraq and a Group of Seven (G7) meeting.

The peso opened at the intra-day low of 55.38 and hit an intra-day high of 55.31. Trading volume at the Philippine Dealing System remained robust at \$279.17 million. It gained another 5 centavos from Monday's finish of 55.40 to the dollar.

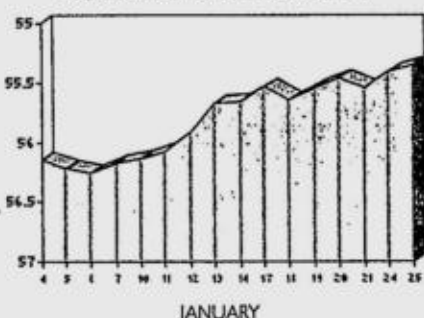
It also stood resilient to pressures arising from profit-taking in the stock market, which corrected yesterday after rising above the 2,000 resistance level for the first time in five years.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura attributed the peso's sustained rally to "strong regional markets, weak corporate demand and continued inflows of remittances and portfolio investments."

The BSP chief said the strong foreign ex-

PESO/B2

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



P 55.35 = \$ 1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 25, 2005

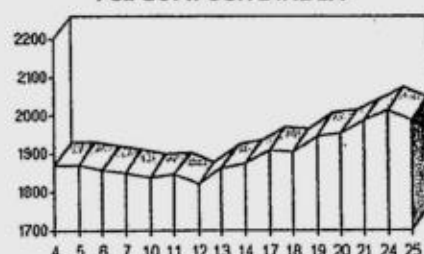
Y 103.14 = \$ 1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 25, 2005

GOLD: \$ 427.40-427.90

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 24, 2005

STOCK MARKET PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares finish lower



SHARES finished lower yesterday on a technical correction after four sessions of gains, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended below its 2000-point psychological support with a loss of 24.96 points, or 1.2 percent, to 1990.29. That followed a 5.8-percent rise in the past four sessions, including Monday's 1.4-percent gain to 2015.25, its highest close in nearly five years.

The commercial-industrial, banks and financial services, and all shares sub-indexes ended lower, while the property, mining, and oil sub-indicators closed higher. Decliners led gainers 75 to 36, while 39 stocks were unchanged.

Total volume of shares traded thinned to 6.69 billion shares valued at P1.76 billions from Monday's 8.03 billion shares worth P1.98 billion.

"This was the long overdue correction the market has been waiting for," said AB Capital Securities research director Jose Vistan.

Vistan said this was one of the rare times that market participants were pleased with the market's retreat.

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Atlas in talks with Chinese groups for Toledo mine reopening

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

GMA-7 '05 capex seen to hit P500M

GMA Network Inc. is earmarking about P500 million for the upgrading of its broadcast coverage this year, its top official said.

The country's most profitable broadcast company yesterday said it had completed last Jan. 19 a P180-million broadcast automation system. This project will strengthen GMA's network capability to support its planned broadcast in the United States and opening of more local channels.

GMA president Felipe Gozon said company would start broadcasting overseas within the first quarter.

At the same time, he said the company would rehabilitate its stations in the provinces to improve signal reception even in remote parts of the country. GMA is also planning to open an ultra-high or very high frequency channel.

"The international channel is currently undergoing test broadcast simulations as GMA plans to launch it in the US east and west coast by the first quarter of 2005. The integrated system was also configured to handle material and commercial play out for the VHF and UHF channels," said GMA in a statement.

Gozon said portion of the proceeds of the P9-billion initial public offering of the company in the first half of the year would be used for the company's future expansion.

"We are allocating not more than P500 million for our capital expenditure this year," Clarissa S. Batino

ATLAS Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. said it was holding negotiations with Chinese mining groups for the possible resumption of mining operations in Atlas' copper mine in Toledo, Cebu.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Atlas Consolidated said these Chinese groups had expressed strong interest to participate in the reopening of the copper mine. It, however, did not identify these groups.

Also, Atlas said it had approved an exit agreement with Toledo Mining Corp. (TMC), where the latter had relinquished its rights to the Toledo copper project. This makes room for other groups to participate in the development of the mine.

A study by Behre Dolbear Australia Ltd. showed that the reopening of the Toledo Copper

mine would cost \$170 million, inclusive of the putting up of a 50-megawatt power plant. At current metal prices, the mine will generate some \$150 million or P8.25 billion in foreign exchange yearly, it added.

Over the last 39 years, three major open-pit operations have been undertaken at the minesite. Atlas has mined a total of approximately 667 metric tons of ore at the Toledo mine.

TMC said it would focus on nickel projects of Atlas, particularly those in Palawan. Under an agreement, Atlas retains a substantial interest in TMC's future nickel operations. Atlas diluted its 46-percent interest in a Berong nickel project in Palawan to 35.2 percent. Atlas will retain 42 percent interest in another nickel project in Uluhan town in Palawan.

TMC will invest \$3 million for

the development of these nickel projects. The amount will complement the \$1 million in funding provided earlier by Australian-listed holding firm Investika Ltd.

Investika, under an earlier agreement, holds the right to acquire 10 percent of Atlas' stake in the Berong nickel project. The Berong nickel project in Palawan contains an estimated resource of 275 million tons of nickel products. Discussions are ongoing with Japanese ferro nickel smelters for the development of the first stage of the project, which may start this year.

Atlas was established through the merger of the assets and equities of three Soriano-controlled pre-war mines—the Masbate Consolidated Mining Co., IXL Mining Co. and the Antamok Goldfields Mining Co.

Atlas is engaged in mineral and metallic mining and exploration.

MacroAsia, Singapore company form logistics services venture

By Clarissa S. Batino

MACROASIA Corp., the listed airline services company of taiwan Lucio Tan, has formed a joint venture with SembCorp Logistics of Singapore to provide third-party logistics services to the local market.

Semblog is listed at the Singapore Exchange and its entry to the Philippines, as well as Indonesia, completes its Asian network. It now operates in 15 countries in Asia.

Semblog-MacroAsia Philippine will manage and execute outsourced logistics functions of its clients, using the strength of the local partner's links with affiliate airlines and aviation support units in tandem with the Singaporean

firm's supply chain expertise.

"This venture is consistent with the goal of MacroAsia to become an integrated logistics provider in the Philippines, particularly in areas near the airports," said MacroAsia president Joseph Chua in a statement.

The new joint venture will initially focus on the export-oriented electronics market, which in 2003 accounted for about 66 percent of the country's total export shipments.

Semblog-MacroAsia is also targeting multinational companies in the Philippines especially those that are already doing business with the Singaporean firm.

It will also explore opportunities in metals logistics and collateral management for commodities—in-

cluding lead, copper and zinc.

"A network like ours is unique. We have supply chain coverage in all the growth markets of the future and we are able to assist customers in FMCG, healthcare, in specialty logistics like metals and collateral management. By being able to operate within a country and across borders, there will be a multiplier effect which will benefit Semblog, our country partners and our customers," said Koh Soo Koong, Semblog president in a statement.

Since 2000, Semblog has been expanding its network across Asia. The company said managing its customers' supply chains on a regional basis would deliver greater efficiency and cost savings.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of January 25, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.5	10,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	29.5	29.5	29	29	5,923,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56.5	56.5	55.5	56.5	1,011,700
China Banking Corp.	57.5	57.5	57	57	550
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48.5	48.5	48	48	13,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.43	0.45	0.43	0.45	2,510,000
International Exch. Bank	18	18	17.75	18	287,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31	31	30	30.5	2,213,900
Philippine National Bank	27.5	29	26	29	245,500
Security Bank Corp.	32	32	31.5	31.5	253,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	28	28	27.5	28	63,900
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	172	172	172	172	100
Manulife Financial Corp.	2400	2405	2395	2400	3,200
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.1	2.14	872,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	115	131	115	131	37,600
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1790	1790	1780	1780	1,120
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATIONS					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.25	18.25	37,500
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.8	1.8	18,718,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	950	955	935	950	70,290
Isaola Inc.	4.2	4.2	4	4	211,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.046	5,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.036	0.034	0.036	9,800,000
Liberty Telecom Holdings	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	240,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.22	2.28	2.22	2.28	52,000
Pilgrimage Tel. Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.75	18,697,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel. Co.	1450	1460	1450	1455	116,800
Ivantage Corp.	0.66	0.68	0.64	0.68	1,590,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	124,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18	18	17.75	17.75	245,900
Manila Electric Co. B	27	27.5	26	26	1,419,500
Petrone Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.85	4,187,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	3,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.18	1.24	1.18	1.24	1,852,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	390,000
Abolito Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	60,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.3	7.3	7	7.2	1,383,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	110,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.42	0.42	2,890,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.81	1	0.81	1	100,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.35	3.6	10,417,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1	1.3	1	1.22	430,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	14,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	115,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	30.5	29.5	29.5	73,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28	27.5	27.5	267,000
Pancake House Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	5,000
RFM Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.73	1,140,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58.5	58.5	57.5	58	72,500
San Miguel Corp. B	77.5	77.5	77.5	77.5	59,900
Universal Robina Corp.	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	138,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	4,990,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.009	0.0075	0.008	178,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	31,000,000
Ayala Corp.	8	8	7.7	7.7	9,702,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.45	0.47	670,000
Abolito Equity Ventures	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	1,681,000
Alo Net Holdings Inc.	0.031	0.031	0.028	0.029	5,600,000
A. S. S. Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.9	5,600,000
APC Group Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.17	0.17	4,470,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	103,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	15,000
Bagulo Gold Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.18	10,000
DKCI Holdings Inc.	21.5	22	21	22	14,000
Baneres Holdings Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.55	22,740,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	0.185	0.21	0.18	0.205	10,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	7,990,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.17	0.26	0.17	0.26	1,700,000
Southeast Asian Cement	4.4	4.4	4.15	4.4	59,110,000
DKCI Holdings Inc.	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	1,200,000
Ever-Goteco Resources	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	778,000
Flintvest Dev. Corp.	37.5	37.5	36	36	7,114,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	1,330,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.58	1.58	82,000
Ionics Inc.	21	21	21	21	21,000
Jardine Davies Inc.	3.25	3.5	3.2	3.35	1,149,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.48	2.48	2.42	2.44	1,886,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	5,600,000
Prime Pacific Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.48	0.49	63,620,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	700,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.18	1.08	1.18	151,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	80,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	850,000
Seafrost Resources Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	5,600,000
Unwired Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.13	2,320,000
Wetlex Industries Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	500,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	150,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	100,000
Corro-Cast Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	5,000
Federal Chemicals Inc.	4	4	4	4	15,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	48,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	120,000
Staniel Manufacturing	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	650,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.62	0.63	4,380,000
Acasite Phils Hotel Corp.	12	13	12	13	2,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.02	3,186,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.59	0.6	0.56	0.56	140,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	25,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.34	2,690,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.4	8.8	8.4	8.8	12,780,000
Aranea Properties, Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.33	1.6	1.6	1.6	91,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	8,000,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	620,000
Unwired East Land Inc.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.4	39,910,000
Flintvest Land Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.32	1.32	3,124,000
Goteco Land Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.07	0.07	1,400,000
Goteco Land Inc. B	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	200,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.185	0.19	0.18	0.19	5,600,000
Phil-Estate Land Inc.	0.69	0.67	0.65	0.67	1,820,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.105	0.11	0.105	0.11	200,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
Primex Corp.	2.9	2.95	2.9	2.95	80,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	60,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.205	2,680,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.4	8.4	8.2	8.2	11,337,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.71	0.72	0.7	0.7	580,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.68	0.7	0.68	0.7	240,000
Alra Mining & Industrial	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	471,000,000
Alas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.3	7.4	6.6	7.4	3,758,000
Benguet Corp. A	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.2	85,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.7	3	2.7	3	58,000
Lapanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.49	0.5	0.47	0.49	31,620,000
Lapanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.56	0.57	0.53	0.55	81,970,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.025	0.023	0.024	2,057,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.035	0.037	0.033	0.037	1,340,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	408,000,000
Phillex Mining Corp. A	1.32	1.38	1.24	1.38	27,677,000
Phillex Mining Corp. B	1.5	1.58	1.4	1.58	36,197,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.37	0.38	0.32	0.38	4,890,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	19,700,000
Interport Res.	0.006	0.006	0.005	0.0055	178,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.006	0.006	0.0055	0.0055	136,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.007	278,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	172,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	480,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
Pacific	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	7,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	68,000
Smith Corp.	0.0825	0.0825	0.075	0.075	3,700,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.3	0.33	0.29	0.33	1,300,000

BPI divestments

IS OCTAVIO Victor Espiritu clearing the way for his appointment as the next governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas? Or is he simply taking advantage of the bullish market?

The former president of Far East Bank and Trust Co., before the bank was subsumed under Bank of the Philippine Islands, has steadily been whittling down his substantial shareholdings in BPI, where he has been retained as director, post-merger.

Espiritu had a total of 1,092,453 BPI shares at end-2003. By the end of 2004, his pile was down to 873,963 shares.

And just the Friday before last, Espiritu disposed of about 200,000 more shares in the market, easily picking up more than P10 million.

In contrast, recently retired BPI president Xavier Loinaz, said to be another candidate for the governorship just like Espiritu, looks more restrained in taking advantage of the bullish market.

Loinaz had 472,657 BPI shares by the end of 2002 and 2003. By the end of last year, this had been reduced to 335,244 shares.

But then again, Loinaz, like the senior BPI officers, received a shares windfall through the company's stock option plan in November, increasing his retirement pile to 760,238 shares.

Apparently, in the span of one

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin



month through Christmas, Loinaz disposed of a total of 424,994 shares, easily worth P20 million at then prevailing prices.

The better part of Diliman

AND speaking of gubernatorial candidates, Bangko Sentral Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. clarified that he attended the other Diliman school, Ateneo de Manila University, where he obtained an AB Economics degree, before proceeding to the University of Wisconsin Madison for graduate school in public policy, with concentration in development economics.

It was actually his wife, Elma, a daughter of former Revenue Commissioner and later Supreme Court Justice Efrén Plana, who attended the University of the Philippines, contrary to what he had reported Monday.

Money-go-round

• THE LORENZOS are trying to negotiate a better price for their 20-percent block and their first refusal rights in Del Monte Pacific.

COCKTALES/B5

US excludes RP...

From page B1

by one notch to BB- from BB.

The Arroyo administration, however, has stayed on track of its medium-term agenda of wiping out its deficit after meeting its fiscal schedule last year. In 2004, the national government's budget deficit stood at only P186.1 billion, or within the P197.8-billion ceiling set by the economic team.

Lowery said, however, that the Philippines needed to show more aggressive efforts to squarely address its budget woes.

The Arroyo administration has been pushing for several legislative measures to raise revenues, but so far Congress has approved only the proposal to raise taxes on "sin" products and implement a reward-and-punishment system for revenue collection agencies.

The executive branch has also initiated administrative measures to raise revenues, such as an

increase in fees and charges and a no-audit program for taxpayers who will voluntarily raise their tax remittance this year by 25 percent from that of last year.

Chic Uniform, Inc.

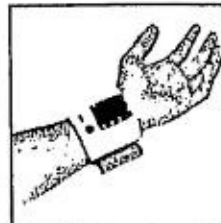
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5-yr treasury bond rate goes down

By Michelle V. Remo

BANKS showed off their high level of liquidity yesterday and scrambled for the virtually risk-free government securities, forcing the five-year treasury bond rate to decline to 11.5 percent.

"Seasonally, the market is very liquid at this time of the year, and so what we had were very good bids," National Treasurer Norma Lasala said in a press briefing after yesterday's auction.

Normally, banks engage in more lending activities at the beginning of the year to aggressively position their investment initiatives, she added.

The new rate for the five-year debt paper was 87.5 basis points lower than the 12.375 percent recorded in October last year. (One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.)

The competitive bids offered by the local capital market, composed mostly of banks, allowed the Bureau of Treasury to comfortably accept P10 billion worth of tenders, thus raising in full its

scheduled borrowing for the week.

The five-year bonds were oversubscribed as total tenders reached P37.68 billion, three times more than the government's P10-billion offering.

Lasala said the warm reception of the market for the five-year debt paper encouraged the Treasury to open a tap facility for the bonds starting yesterday afternoon. Through the tap facility, market players whose bids were rejected can still avail themselves of the government securities over the counter, although at a lower interest rate.

The official said the Treasury was looking at making a debt offering of P2 billion more from the five-year bonds using the tap facility.

Aside from the market's high level of liquidity, Lasala also credited the positive fiscal data for 2004, as well as the official projections of a lower budget deficit for 2005, for the positive response of the local market to the government's debt offering.

BSP tightens rules on forex dealers

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has issued a new circular tightening the rules on the operations of foreign exchange dealers or money changers and remittance agents.

The new rules seek to address the remaining concerns of the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force against money laundering from whose blacklist of so-called "uncooperative" countries the Philippines hopes to graduate from within this year.

The new circular requires the registration of all qualified persons or non-bank institutions wishing to act as foreign exchange dealers/money changers or remittance agents.

Dealers or remittance agents are mandated to strictly document all sales or purchases of foreign currencies, similar to the know-your-customer policy adopted by banks. Among other information, the presentation of a government-issued identification document such as Social Security System/Government Service Insurance System or voters' ID, drivers' license or passport is required.

There must also be a notarized application together with supporting documents in case of foreign exchange transactions exceeding \$5,000 or its equivalent.

"Foreign exchange dealers/money changers shall see to it that this (\$5,000) limit on the sale of foreign exchange is not breached by the splitting of a foreign exchange purchase into smaller amounts so as to make it

appear that the purchase does not violate the prescribed limit," the circular said.

There is deemed to be splitting of foreign exchange if the forex dealer/money changer sells foreign exchange to any one purchaser within a 15-day banking day period in such individual amounts which, when combined, amount to more than \$5,000 or its equivalent, the circular explained.

Forex dealers or money changers are defined as those regularly engaged in the business of buying and selling foreign currencies.

Remittance agents, on the other hand, refer to persons or entities that offer to remit, transfer or transmit money on behalf of any person to another person or entity.

All remittance agents are required to maintain an "accurate" and "meaningful" originator information on funds transferred or remitted by requiring the sender to fill up and sign an application form.

The remittance agent may rely on the referral of its office/correspondent bank abroad provided that there is a record of such referral together with the minimum identification, information/documents required under the law and its implementing rules and regulations.

All foreign exchange dealers and remittance agents are also required to submit to the Anti-Money Laundering Council a report on covered transactions and suspicious transactions within five banking days from the date of such transaction or from the date

BSP/B5

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List of Winners for the Delinquency Assistance Promo – 1st Raffle Draw – January 18, 2005

SEQ	RAFFLE NO.	SS NUMBER	MEMBER'S NAME	MAILING ADDRESS
1	00031099	03-2704875-8	BEATO S. DELA CRUZ	#56 COR JAPAN / ISRAEL PH IV GREENLAND SUBD NANGKA MARIKINA 1808 117 MERCURY ST PUENTE VILLA SUBD TACULING BACOLOD CITY 6100
2	00041160	07-0205710-2	HERINANE M. VALDERRAMA	15 CROWN ST MERALCO VILL TAYTAY RIZAL 1920 819 L10 YSL ST MOLINO HOMES 5 MOLINO BACOR CAVITE 4102 9007 TOYONA HI-WAY HABAY II BACOR CAVITE 4102 168 RD 2 VISAYAN HILLS OLD BALARA QUEZON CITY 1121 22 MOLAVE DRIVE 1, D. MALIT, NAGKASANG NAYON NOVA CC 1125 #97 ILANG-ILANG ST KARUHATAN VALENZUELA CITY 1441 110 F MARQUEZ ST SINEQUELASAN BACOR CAVITE 4102 LOT3 BLK E-20 SAN MATEO DBB DASMARINAS CAVITE POBLACION 1, CLARIN, MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL 7201 3RD ST JEREZA SUBD BRGY W. AQUINO, DAVAO CITY 8000 B3 L9 LA HACIENDA SUBD SITIO GMC TERESA RIZAL 1800 B3A BAGOONG SILANG MOLINO II BACOR CAVITE 4102 #177 FORT SANTIAGO ST., BAGO BANTAY, QUEZON CITY 1100 TUMAGA ZAMBOANGA CITY 7000 RIVERSIDE CALINAN DAVAO CITY 8000 16 SAN FRANCISCO HALANG BINAN LAGUNA 4024 BPI LAMAO LIMAY BATAAN 330 BUENLAG CALASIAO PANGASINAN 2418 816 ROSARITO ST SAMPALOC MANILA LA FORTUNA, LILA, BOHOL 6304 SAN JUAN SORSOGON CITY 4700 28 KOWLOON ST. BF HOMES PARANAQUE CITY 1700 CABALAGNAN VALENCIA GUIMARAS 5046 GEN TAINO ST 1 PANGSANJAN LAGUNA 4008 39 D1 CONSENSO ST DAAN BULO ORION BATAAN 2102 ZONE 1 BUENAVISTA SAN FERNANDO, CAM. SUR 4415
3	00009037	03-5627293-5	ELISA M. AQUINO	
4	00001224	03-3969291-4	MIRIAM S. GUEVARRA	
5	00060662	03-1991653-9	BAYANI S. MANGUERRA	
6	00029429	03-9475924-5	DIODELYN V. REMORIATA	
7	00018639	03-7502023-6	LEODEGARIO D. NICOLAS	
8	00027058	03-9155898-6	JAMES R. LASQUETE	
9	00036169	03-2426262-1	FRANKLIN C. MARQUEZ	
10	00040962	03-2307373-0	VIRGILIO V. FABRO	
11	00025939	03-8638109-7	MA GLENN B. MELGAR	
12	00051674	09-0196903-3	JOSE JORGE C. YAP JR	
13	00033664	03-4086372-9	CARLITO G. ESPIRITU	
14	00042112	06-1584332-2	RUBEN A. CANQUE	
15	00065777	33-1925708-8	DARLENE B. BATAO	
16	00058920	10-082409-4	RODRIGO B. SINGSON	
17	00054310	09-0402295-1	ABELARDO P. SIMBRE	
18	00062489	33-0853641-9	MANOLITO S. ALMENANZA	
19	00000135	02-0112517-9	CRISANTO N. MONSANTO	
20	00000674	01-0934054-8	CRISANTO P. USON	
21	00046167	03-2259884-6	RAMON T. SORIANO	
22	00048506	08-0699627-9	RANULFO L. RAUT	
23	00032743	05-0276252-9	CYNTHIA V. JOSUE	
24	00020419	03-3223711-4	AGNES B. SANTOS	
25	00011156	03-5941621-9	FEMO G. ESPISO	
26	00034025	04-0733026-3	JOCELYN D. CAMPANG	
27	00075766	02-1221122-1	AGNES L. TRINIDAD	
28	00035008	05-0422255-9	MARIA TERESA T. PANIS	
29	00049388	08-0587059-7	NICK J. REQUITILLO	
30	00077746	03-1202483-9	JAIME D. REYES	
31	00037499	06-0513239-0	CARMENCITA C. REVANO	
32	00073480	02-0260323-7	ARIEL R. MARTINEZ	
33	00069146	03-1641012-9	REDEN A. CABEROY	
34	00012020	03-5701631-0	EMELINA B. MEMUE	
35	00051917	01-0351861-9	SUSAN A. REGNIM	
36	00067518	03-2391335-3	FELIMON E. PENALOSA	
37	00072644	33-3347211-1	ALICIA M. GUERRERO	
38	00017788	03-7701375-9	DINDO R. AMOYO	
39	00021335	03-3600416-5	RAYMUNDO V. YAPIT JR	
40	00073792	02-0345629-6	OSCAR S. CALMA	
41	00018267	03-7633338-8	NELLY U. MANUEL	
42	00019965	03-2924460-2	FLORO C. CABATOS	
43	00017395	03-7771194-1	JACQUELINE S. AGUILAR	
44	00058872	33-1536349-7	WILMA DOLOR C. SEVILLEJA	
45	00040167	08-0911268-7	GRACE F. AWIT	
46	00047019	08-0420643-7	JESSILIN P. VENTORILLO	
47	00077680	03-1194552-4	DIOSDADO L. SALANG	
48	00082528	33-0664156-6	EMELYN E. SOMERA	
49	00027320	03-9017738-4	MA CECILIA G. DEQUITO	
50	00012014	03-5701631-0	EMELINA B. MEMUE	
51	00058534	10-0349185-1	ESTRELLITA J. VICENTE	
52	00006676	03-5587649-7	PROSPERO S. MANUEL	
53	00045651	03-2087689-1	RODOLFO C. DE CASTRO	
54	00034362	06-0286628-6	WILFREDO M. ABAYABAY	
55	00035623	05-0317860-4	BALTAZAR C. LEONARDO	
56	00050265	03-1660554-2	CECILIA S. CASTILLO	
57	00012148	03-5769697-6	EMILIO C. IGNACIO	
58	00011257	03-5955788-0	LEONILLO L. BANAAG	
59	00035192	05-0508934-8	CORAZON P. RARA	
60	00068465	33-1084420-3	PRETZEL CECILIA P. LIM	
61	00067645	03-1727307-0	RODRIGO V. MERIS JR	
62	00059505	33-0398536-6	MADONA LYN V. VICTORIO	
63	00045418	07-1226970-2	FLOMENO T. MOSCOSO	
64	00034255	06-0279522-1	MIGUEL V. BATUIGAS	
65	00047038	08-0420643-7	JESSILIN P. VENTORILLO	
66	00001335	03-402049-4	PERFUND. CASIDO	
67	00008018	03-5154563-8	JAIME B. DELA CRUZ	
68	00016228	03-7344013-5	RAMON J. BALAGTAS	
69	00025908	03-8633518-5	ESMERALDO R. SANTOS	
70	00023628	03-8302269-5	ROSELIO L. PARAS JR	
71	00057506	03-1825338-3	MELQUIADES C. MENDOZA	
72	00039145	06-1050894-9	MARIA JENNIFER T. FUNTANAR	
73	00066345	33-2000426-2	CERILLO C. BERSANO	
74	00032890	05-023601-8	JOSE T. IMO	
75	00046347	03-2269144-3	LETICIA C. SERRANO	
76	00060999	03-2070842-2	JERRY C. ESPINOSA	
77	00023286	03-8405698-7	LIGAYA P. CAMPO	
78	00013133	03-6331121-6	NORMA C. DULOT	
79	00061024	03-2073146-0	ROSALINDA N. RANAS	
80	00034800	06-0220625-7	ANDRES F. ARCAVENA	
81	00082692	33-0712550-4	NOEL M. ENRIQUEZ	
82	00075248	02-097094-7	MARICEL A. AQUINO	
83	00028082	03-9009212-6	ELEANOR R. LOMIGUEN	
84	00045092	07-1385703-2	COPERNICO V. GALELE	
85	00048774	08-0743884-6	ATWEL A. CASTILLA	
86	00011260	03-5955788-0	LEONILLO L. BANAAG	
87	00019539	03-7999392-9	MILAGROS U. SABADO	
88	00005900	03-4941245-6	ARCANGEL R. BARRAMEDA	
89	00033094	05-0110530-7	ELMER B. JACINTO	
90	00061987	33-0808571-0	VERONICA B. SIDENO	
91	00029737	03-9302742-6	MELITO C. VEGA	
92	00049339	08-0580007-8	EMMANUEL N. PIZARRAS	
93	00033090	05-0110530-7	ELMER B. JACINTO	
94	00013127	03-6327584-4	VAL O. PALAD	
95	00024827	03-6900324-9	JULIUS THADEUS M. JABINAL	
96	00063082	33-0760472-4	SUSANA D. BELASKES	
97	00004968	03-4488208-5	DOROTEO S. IGNACIO	
98	00034047	04-0737968-0	RUTCHIN A. TAPAN	
99	00013983	03-4939643-7	EDGARDO V. CATADMAN	
100	00016315	03-7142325-2	CHARITO D. RABULAN	

The following will be notified by mail as regards their prizes.

For further inquiries please call Loans Collection Program Management Department. Tel. No. 920-64-01 locals 5168 to 5771 or Members Loans Program Management Department locals 5131 to 5135.

(PDI - January 26, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Negros Oriental
Provincial General Services Office
Dumaguete City

INVITATION TO BID

The Committee on Awards of the Provincial Government of Negros Oriental invites all interested suppliers to submit sealed bids for the following requirements:

2 units 2nd Hand, Converted (Right Hand to Left Hand Drive) Land Cruiser HDJ80 Series.

The Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on January 31, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. at the Provincial General Services Office, Capitol Area, Dumaguete City while the submission and opening of bids is scheduled on February 11, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. also at the same venue.

The Committee on Awards reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any required formality and award the contract to the bidder whose bid proposal as evaluated by the Committee is the most advantageous to the government, nor to indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

ATTY. ISMAEL P. MARTINEZ
Provincial General Services Officer

(PDI-Jan. 26, 2005)

ILOILO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
POTOTAN, ILOILO
529-8668 / 529-8063 / 529-8064
E-mail: ileco2@i-loilo.com.ph

January 20, 2005

INVITATION TO BID

The Iloilo II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ILECO II) is inviting interested bidders for the bidding of the following items at ILECO II on February 22, 2005 at 1:30 p.m., Main Office, Brgy. Cau-ayan, Pototan, Iloilo:

ITEM 1 (For Pototan Substation)
Lot Includes:
One (1) 69 KV Circuit Breaker, Three (3) Units Current Transformers, Control and Protection, Battery and Charger.

ITEM 2 (For Passi Substation)
Three (3) Units 69 KV Potential Transformers
Interested bidders can pick-up bidding documents at ILECO II Main Office, Brgy. Cau-ayan, Pototan, Iloilo.

For further information, please contact Mr. Fernando Lasatin or Engr. Rodmond Roquios or call at Tel. Nos. 529-8063 or 529-8668.

(Sgd.) RAMON P. APURA, SR.
General Manager

(PDI - Jan. 26, 2005)

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

In consonance with R.A. 8976 otherwise known as the Philippine Food Fortification Act of 2000, the National Food Authority (NFA) as the implementing agency on iron fortified rice, wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on February 24, 2005 at 10:00 AM at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City among all interested suppliers for the supply of THREE HUNDRED METRIC TONS (300 MT), MAXIMUM IRON COATED RICE GRAIN PREMIX (FORTIFICANT) with an approved budget of Php 52M, packed in twenty five (25) or fifty (50) kg capacity nitrogen or vacuum sealed laminated film bag as primary packaging and multi-walled paper as secondary packaging (strong enough to withstand handling). Detailed product specifications shall be included in the Terms of Reference (TOR). Delivery period at designated NFA Manila warehouse/s shall be not later than 31 May 2005 and with BUYER'S option for an early delivery.

All interested suppliers are required to submit price offers in Philippine Currency (inclusive of all taxes) as specified in the NFA Bid Form.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 5% of the approved budget of Php 52M in the form of Cash, Cashier's and/or Manager's Check or an irrevocable LC issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila.

List of Eligibility Requirements and Instruction to Bidders may be secured thru MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ, Assistant Department Manager and MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO, Division Manager, Department for Marketing Operations, 5th Flr., NFA Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City, Telephone Nos. 712-1564, 743-86-96 or 712-3341 Loc. 8513 Loc. 8513 starting January 26, 2005.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) and Bid Documents will likewise be available starting January 26, 2005 up to February 16, 2005 (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM) upon payment of a Php 15,000.00 non-refundable fee.

The Pre-Bidding conference will be held on February 10, 2005 at 10:00 AM at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr., Avenue, Quezon City.

Submission of eligibility requirements, technical proposal and price offers will be between 8:00 AM to 9:55 AM at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City on February 24, 2005. Opening of bids will start at exactly 10:00 A.M.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required or defect therein and accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) JESSUP P. NAVARRO
Deputy Administrator and
Chairman, Bids and Awards
Committee

(PDI - January 26 & February 4, 2005)



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INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("PSALM") Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee ("Committee") invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the privatization of the following:

Cebu II Diesel Power Plant Equipment, Components, Auxiliaries and Accessories located at Barrio Talavera, Toledo City, Cebu

(the "Asset"). The Asset is being sold on an "as is where is" basis.

Interested parties are required to submit a Letter of Interest ("LOI") to PSALM which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax number of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. All LOIs must be received by PSALM at the PSALM Office, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, not later than 5:00 p.m. on February 8, 2005 (the "LOI Submission Deadline"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Hundred U.S. Dollars (U.S. \$500.00) (the "Participation Fee"). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party.

The Bidding Package shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from January 26, 2005 until February 9, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. (the "Deadline") at the PSALM Office. Only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence	January 27 to February 28, 2005
Pre-bid Conference	February 17, 2005
Deadline for Receipt of Bids by PSALM	March 15, 2005

A single stage two-envelope bidding system has been adopted. Other details of the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package. References to dates and times in this notice shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to ten percent (10%) of its total bid price in the form of an Irrevocable letter of credit, confirmed by a local bank and acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guarantee prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telephone number (632) 893-8202, fax number (632) 8405341 or e-mail address fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify any party for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) VINCENT S. PEREZ, JR.
Chairman
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Jan. 26, 27 & 28, 2005)



Cocktales

From page B3

ic, but the camp of taipan Lucio Tan has so far been standing firm, since the Lorenzos' first refusal rights cover only 20 percent, or just half of the entire 40 percent that Tan is acquiring from the bankrupt Italian majority shareholder.

• **PHILIPPINE National Bank** has agreed to lend P150 million to the province of Cavite to finance the acquisition of public works equipment. The loan is guaranteed by the province's internal revenue allotment.

• **TWO** pieces of property of the Nisces, the family behind the moribund Philippine Rabbit bus company, in Santa Cruz are set to be auctioned by the Manila sheriff next month to pay off about P40 million in debt to China-

bank. It is not immediately clear if one of the two lots includes the Philippine Rabbit bus terminal on Avenida Rizal.

• **FORMER** Revenue Commissioner Rene Bafiez has been appointed as a senior vice president of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Heard through the grapevine

TARLAC Rep. Jesli Lapus' name as a possible trade and industry secretary was apparently submitted late in the day, as the post to be vacated with the impending transfer of Cesar Purisima to the finance department had already been reserved for, and accepted by, Nestle chair Juan Santos.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

BSP tightens rules on forex dealers

From page B3

they learned that the transaction was done for the purpose of laundering proceeds of criminal or other illegal

activities.

For this purpose, covered transactions refer to cash or equivalent mon-

etary instrument involving a sum in excess of P500,000 within one banking day.

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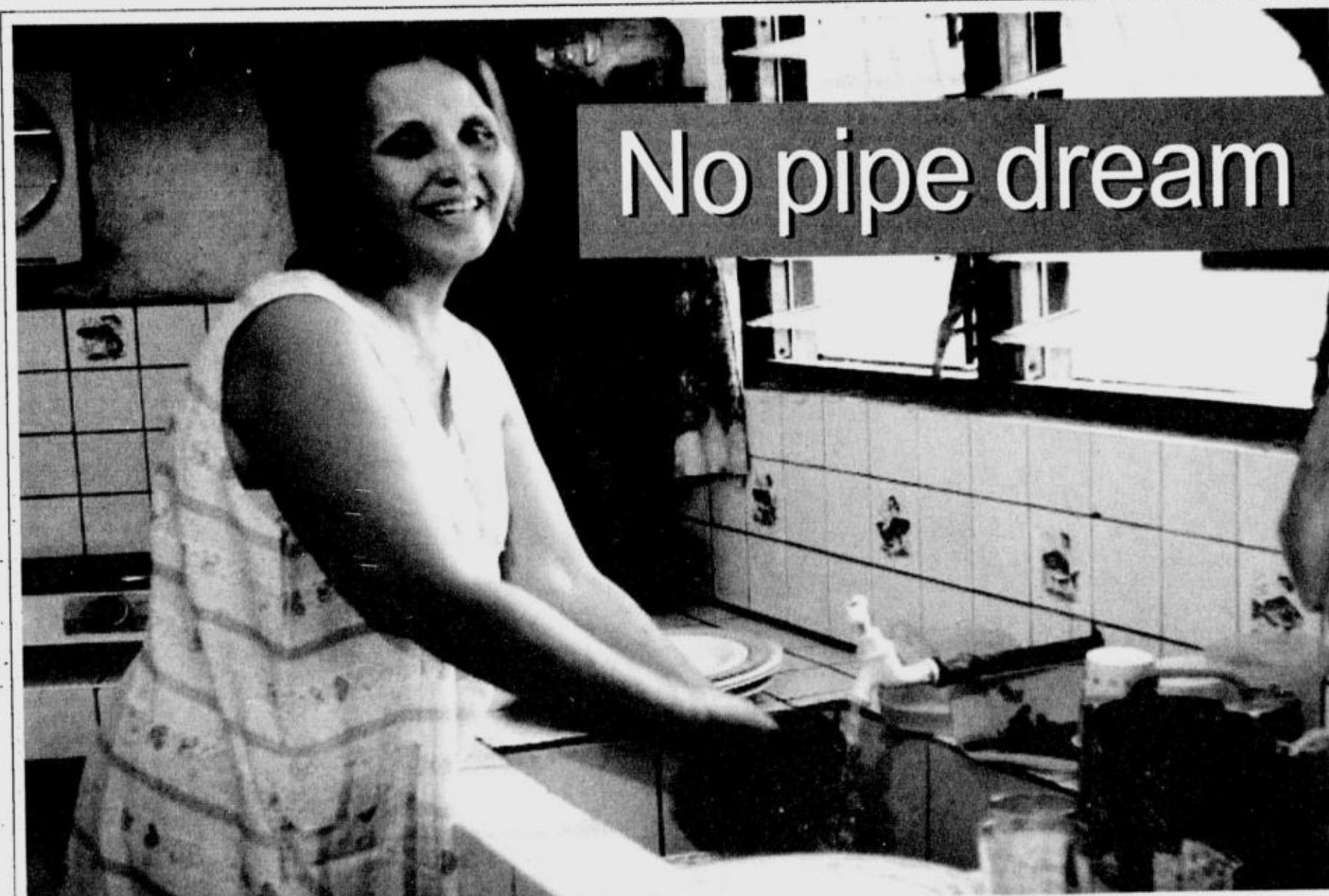
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No pipe dream

More than 2,000 families in Mandaluyong City finally get to sleep soundly at nights, thanks to having water flowing from their taps.

NO MORE WATER WOES. Formerly waterless Aling Fely Griarte now in her newly renovated kitchen.

For years, Fely Griarte felt she was acting out a surreal scene from a soap opera.

Every day just after midnight, she and her children would rush out of bed to join more than a hundred tired bodies and a long line of pails, scrambling for water from a public faucet.

Her life, Aling Fely said, could be told in numbers: 59 years old, five to ten pails, 95 minutes of waiting, 8 a.m. before the faucet runs dry.

For around 2,000 families in Blocks 37-39 Welfareville, Barangay Addition Hills in Mandaluyong City, life revolved around one public faucet.

"Every day, we were robbed of a good rest, good health; some were too tired to stay awake at work," said Aling Fely, a long-time resident and meat inspector at the Pasig City Hall.

Some enterprising people in the area used to charge residents about P400 to

P500 a month reselling water from deep wells.

As many lived on daily wages as laborers, water was a pricey commodity. So when Manila Water Company, Inc. started supplying water to the area in 2002 as part of its *Tubig Para sa Barangay* flagship project, Aling Fely

said she and her neighbors thought, "our prayers have finally been answered."

Not only are Welfareville residents enjoying 24-hour water availability, their average monthly water bill has been halved.

Now that they can put their water woes

to rest, Aling Fely and her neighbors focus on improving the quality of the other aspects of their lives.

Since Manila Water initiated in the area the *Kabuhayan Para sa Barangay*, a microfinance program, many have gone into piggery, tilapia or goat raising, *sari-sari* store, ready-to-wear, and eatery

businesses.

Many residents used to think it would be hard to get out of the economic rut in Welfareville.

"We didn't know we could live our dreams again when water started coming out of our faucets," Aling Fely said.

More than one million people added

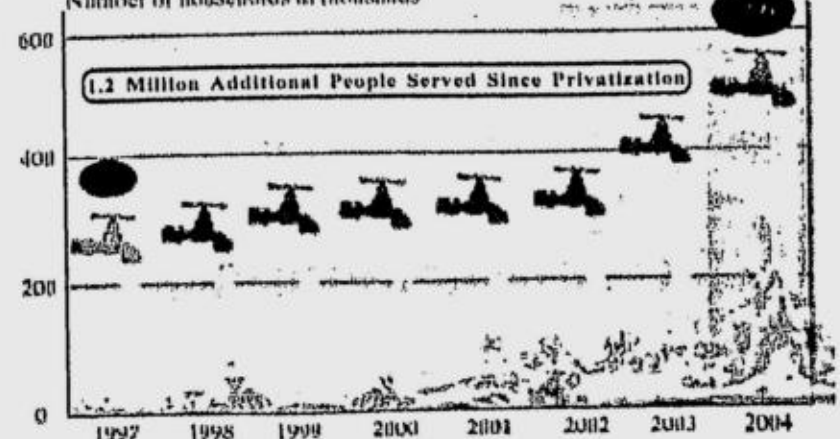
Ayala-led Manila Water Company, Inc. already serves more than 556,000 households since the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) was privatized in 1997.

Eighty-seven percent of the East Zone population now has 24-hour water supply - more than triple the area being served in 1997 when only 27 percent were benefiting from uninterrupted service.

To sustain its financial viability, the private contractor is embarking on a P19-billion capital expansion program over the next five years.

Its goal is to cover 94 percent of the East Zone population, lay down 885 kilometers of new pipelines and replace century-old pipes in the metropolis.

Number of households in thousands



PEOPLE *at* WORK

Text us your feedback: Inquirer paw name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor Raul O. Marcelo

Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

The good, the bad and the ugly of office gossip

By Celestine Orlina
Contributor

PEOPLE
AT WORK
Pulse



GOOD news travels fast, bad news travels faster and embarrassing news travels at the speed of light. As the Filipino saying goes, *May tenga ang lupa, may pakpak ang balita* (The earth has ears, news has wings). This is true in life as well as in any organization, where communication is essential in ensuring the smooth operation of business and facilitating relationships among its members.

Formal channels of communications—memos, policies and meetings—are some ways information flows through the organization. However, informal channels or the so-called grapevine are potent sources of information as well. Because grapevines are personal and flexible, it is possibly one of the most rapid and unrivalled communication systems in any organization.

This month's People at Work Pulse report focuses on how often employees engage in office gossip and if indeed, it is inevitable in the workplace. The report reveals what are the usual topics of gossip, the reasons for engaging in it, the impact of gossip in the workplace and which gender engages in gossip more.

There were 35 respondents, 31 percent males and 69 percent females, working in different industries. Their ages ranged from 21 to 59 and 40 percent were married, 57 percent were single, and 3 percent were separated.

Gossip as a way of life?

Forty-three percent (43 percent) of the respondents claimed that they engage in office gossip "everyday," while 29 percent responded "rarely."

Fourteen percent (14 percent) said they engage in gossip "once a month," 9 percent answered "once a week" and only 3 percent said "not at all." Majority of respondents (60 percent) also agreed that gossip is inevitable in an organization.

The most common topics of gossip in the workplace according to the respondents are conflict (77 percent), other employees (63 percent), and office romance (60 percent). Other topics that employees talk about in the office are the boss (57 percent), new policies (43 percent), promotions (34 percent), layoffs (26 percent), holidays and bonuses (31 percent) and show biz personalities (14 percent).

The prevalent reasons cited for engaging in office gossip are to hear different opinions of people (66 percent), to keep themselves up-to-date (66 percent), for fun and to make life interesting (49 percent) and to bond with fellow officemates (49 percent). Other reasons mentioned were to express own opinions (43 percent), to have the feeling of being "in the loop" (31 percent) and to fill in the lack of information from management (31 percent).

The good and bad

Most of the respondents believe that gossip creates conflict (51 percent), decreases morale of employees concerned (40 percent), and decreases productivity (37 percent). However, others also recognize that gossip may have positive effects. One-third believes that it provides management information about what employees think and 20 percent cited that it improves employee relations. Only 14 percent believe that



gossip has no impact, that it is harmless.

Three-fourths of the respondents think that females engage more in gossip. It is important to note though that some of the respondents indicated that they chose a particular gender merely because it is the majority in their current company (e.g. engineering firms consist mostly of males).

Managing gossip

Although gossip is seen as fun, it rarely is especially for the subject of hurtful rumors. For the unlucky butt of nasty gossip, the problem is how to deal with being the subject of gossip? One way is to choose to wait it out. Hopefully in time, gossip will dissipate and do no harm. If it persists, one can publicly disclaim the rumor to reveal its "news value." It is also advisable to feed positive information to the grapevine to counterbalance the negative news.

On the organizational level, management should attempt to put an ear to the ground to see what is being talked about in the grapevine. It may indicate gaps in the organization's communication process. Of course, prevention is the best antidote to the grapevine. This can be done through openly sharing pertinent information to the employees. Continually engaging in honest and frank dialogue, where there is empathy and effective listening, can enhance the climate of trust within the organization and encourage people to talk to with each other rather than about each other.

And for those who think gossip is fun and harmless, it is best to remember the Spanish proverb, "Whoever gossips to you will gossip about you."

(Ms Celestine Orlina is a graduate student in IO Psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. Send feedback to ateneocord@admu.edu.ph.)

How to make working from home for you

WAHMs of the world unite! Since I wrote my column about the leap from being an office mom to being a work-at-home mom (WAHM), other WAHMs have been coming out of the woodwork. There were notes of encouragement, advice, and rejoicing. At last, some recognition for the work-at-home class, they seemed to say. One WAHM even said: "I have been following your Working Mom column for quite sometime, wondering when you were going to wake up and smell the home-cooking. I see, finally, that you did. Congratulations!"

WAHMs need this kind of support. Working out of our solitary desks, hidden in some nook at home, we need all the validation we can get that the decision we've made, though off-the-beaten track, is worth all the adjustment. The most encouraging letter came from reader Grace Magno. With her indulgence, I am sharing her advice with you. It's very sound, clear, no sugar-coating advice from a WAHM whose been there, done that and will do it all over again given a chance.

A graceful note

Grace writes: "I am probably one of the earliest moms who have discovered the joys of working in pajamas (when I want to), watching movies mid-day (when my sanity screams for it—mind you, this is few and far between), and answering 70 e-mails at midnight in my home office while my husband silently stews then falls asleep waiting, waiting, waiting for me to come up to bed. (I am a marketing consultant.) I also help other people and entities when I have the time and the strength. Since becoming a consultant, An, the accomplishment I am proudest of is finishing my Masters in Theology, Major in Family Ministry and Counseling, at the Ateneo de Loyola School of Theology, which I did over a four-year period. It was wonderful for my own personal growth, and now gives me the confidence to believe I can carve out an alternative career as a counselor, or as a child and adolescent psychologist, a goal I am pursuing next."

"Ah, the freedom of (being a WAHM) is wonderful, An, but beware its pitfalls. My home office has no door and is a room just opposite my sala, from where I can view the front veranda and the street. The dogs and tricycles passing by can be heard when I am trying to have a power conversation with someone, and yet instead of being apologetic, I am so proud to be one of the first few people to (I think) have done this working-from-home bit successfully."

Aiming for balance

"The most serious pitfall is taking on more and more work, thinking that since you've got free time, you can handle it all. Who suffers most? (The) ones who complain the least. That's your husband, and your kids. (Even as you now) struggle to have conversations on the phone—with people who don't understand why there is a giggling baby somewhere (you want to bite

his head off, or silently signal to the yaya frantically to get him out!) (you must remember) that soon your three-year old will eventually stop coming into your home office. Or else (you decide) to have a great dinner with your friends, or (you cram) a sh t-load of meetings all in a day outside the house, so that the next day you can (be free) to just do the groceries and answer mail. Only to (get home and) open your mail and find 70 messages all urgently awaiting your response or approval. This happens to me now every single day."

WORKING MOM



An Mercado Alcantara

"My husband of course, always used that yes-you-are-at-home-but-you-are-not-really-here argument. He says when I talk to him, it's all small talk, while my mind is somewhere off in space. It's true and can happen to you, too, An."

"The difference is, however, you can stand up to make sure the *ulam* the cook is making is not *maalat*, and that the *labandera* does not forget to iron your suit for the next day's meeting. When you (work from an office), you forget and come home to a salty and cold meal and your kids in bed."

"Would I have changed anything about my life if I had the chance? Not a wee bit! I love this and I recommend it to everyone who asks (and even those who do not ask). It is the most empowering thing I have done, and I feel that I have grown so much ever since I declared, 'I'm outta here!' meaning the office scene."

Taking the leap

"Stepping into the abyss of the work-at-home mom gives you a chance to re-assess not only your work priorities, but your whole life! Yes, you can go to school again, even it is just cooking school. Yes, you can watch a movie at noon-time when a scheduled meeting does not push through at the last minute. Will you pay for it somewhere? Of course! But what the heck? Balance is key, and I think it is up to us to juggle the freedom we now have. Through balance, you will have a husband you can cuddle up to who cuddles you back (and not resentfully turns his back on you in the middle of a snore). And kids who can respect your time at "the office" and wait for you to move to the softer sofa where you can "talk about the day, mom." You will have better-tasting food, cleaner laundry, a brighter house and no, work does not have to suffer."

If you're a work-at-home mom like Grace and would like to share your own experience, I'd gladly open this space for your thoughts and advice. Let us all unite!

(An Mercado-Alcantara is founding editor of Working Mom magazine published by ABS-CBN Publishing, Inc. E-mail feedback to an.alcantara@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

Readers share views on pros and cons of living in the country

By Tita Datu
Puangco

Advice
FOR THE
ANXIOUS PERSON
AT WORK



and a promise of security. Unfortunately, the Philippines cannot provide both. —US is

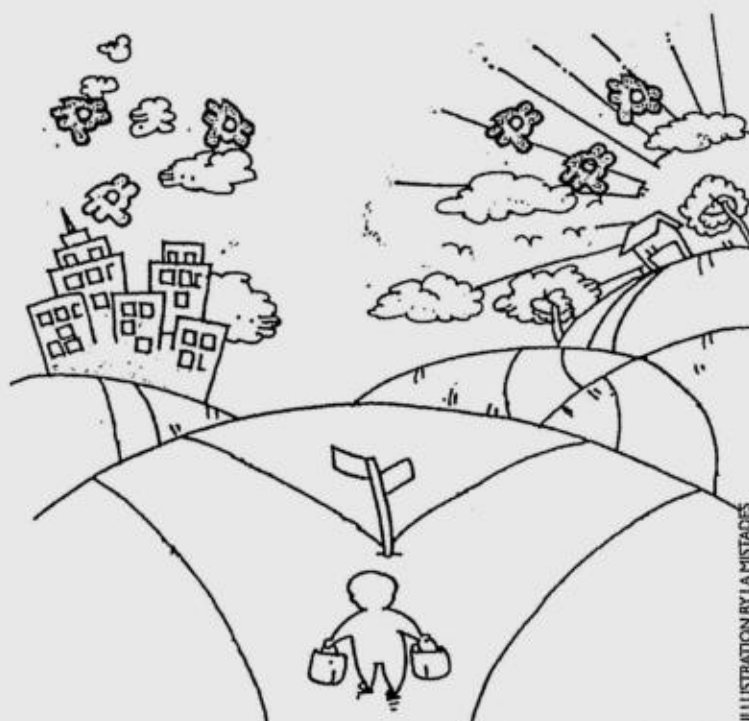
Better

I have a story to tell. My mother retired in Ternate, Cavite. After a few years on September 1994, they found my mother's lifeless body inside our house. Until now, there are no suspects and the case is closed. Do you think retiring in the Philippines is good? Thanks. —ARH

I just read your reply to the American who wants to retire in the Philippines, but was afraid of all that is going on. I am an American. My wife and I are planning to retire in her homeland. I hope over the next few years to build some low-income apartments in Metro Manila. My wife is there now, trying to get these going. We have other plans too. We currently have a house built in Leyte. I spent six months there and loved it.

My answer to the other American is this: There is no such thing as a perfect place to live. All places have some risk to it. I was born and raised in Chicago. Safe? Well, each year, most major American cities including Chicago, have at least 500 murders, and countless other crimes. I was near death three to four times while growing up in Chicago. I know what it is to look down the barrel of a gun as your personal belongings are being taken away.

Do I fear living in the Philippines? Yes, just as much as I fear certain parts of America. Wherever you live, you can quietly go



your way. Don't show off how much jewelry you have or wear expensive things when you go out. Make friends with your neighbors who will watch your back. Not just acquaintances, but friends. That is the only way to live, anywhere in the world. I have worked in Colombia, S.A. People thought I would get killed or kidnapped there. I am still alive.

You are afraid of being bombed or kidnapped. Would you have felt safer on a train in Spain? Terrorists bombed the trains. Maybe you are safer on a subway train in Japan? Terrorists set off poisons and killed people in the subway. Are you safer working at the Pentagon or maybe on the 100th floor of the World Trade Center? What about the two friends who flew on separate planes to California, so they

can be safe; only to have both those planes end up in the WTC. We all know now how safe places were on 9/11!

You see if you are in the wrong place at the wrong time, you cannot control what happens. There is no 100 percent safe place in the world! You can only do what you can to protect yourself. Also, don't frequent places that cater only to foreigners! That is asking for trouble. Try to blend in with the Filipino people. I go only to resorts and restaurants that cater to the Filipinos. Good luck. Try to live in the Philippines for a few months and see how beautiful life can be on the islands. —BV

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph or fax to 892-2902.)

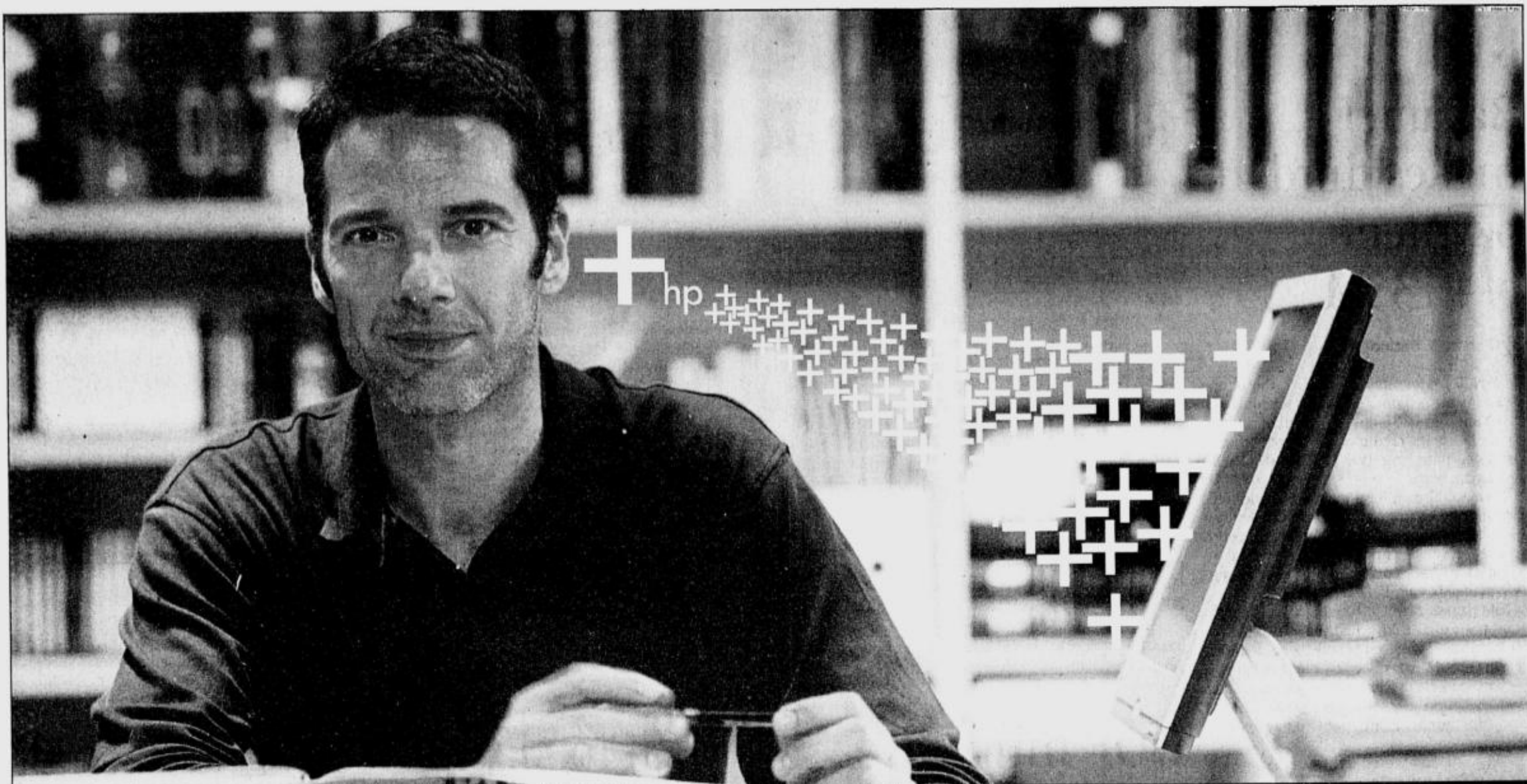
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"We Never Lose Those We Give to God"

Engr. Francisco "Panching" Tan Gana y Miranda



of Biñan, Laguna
April 2, 1911 – January 22, 2005

A loving husband,
a dedicated father and grandfather,
a good public servant, a war hero and a gentleman.



*Sadly, we have to face and endure an empty space in our hearts,
but we rejoice in thanking the Almighty God for giving him to us
and for providing him with a happy place in His Kingdom.*

His loving wife, REMEDIOS "Meding" TAN GANA y ARCEGA (†), children and grandchildren;

Drs. ROSALIA & Marcos Galicia, Jr.
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brother Faustino (†), sisters Celedonia TG. Ambas (†), Luisa TG. Masangkay (†), Agatona TG. Cuy (†), Catalina TG. Roque, Pilar TG. Molina & Alejandra TG. Cerdeña, brothers and sisters-in-law, great grandchildren, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence at 61 Gen. Capinpin St., San Vicente, Biñan, Laguna. Interment will be announced later.



We remember with deep love and affection

SALVADOR "DOY" LAUREL

Once Vice President of the Philippines

*On his first death anniversary
January 27, 2005*

*We, his wife, Celia, children, grandchildren,
brother and sisters*

*Invite you to join us in prayer
for the eternal repose of his soul*

*A special Mass will be said at the
Santuario de San Antonio,
Forbes Park, Makati City, at 10:00 a.m.*

Masses will also be celebrated in the following churches:

Don Bosco Church, Makati City	12:15 noon
San Ildefonso Church, Makati City	6:00 A.M.
Santuario de San Jose, North Greenhills	7:15 A.M.
Mary the Queen, San Juan, West Greenhills	7:00 A.M.
Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows, QC	7:00 A.M.
Christ the King Church, E. Rodriguez Avenue, QC	6:30 A.M.
Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon City	8:00 A.M.
St. Francis Parish Church, Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong	6:00, 6:30, 7:30 A.M., 6:00 P.M.
St. Jude Archdiocesan Shrine, J.P. Laurel St., San Miguel, Manila	6:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M.
Miraculous Medal Church, San Marcelino, Manila	8:00 A.M.
St. James Church, Ayala Alabang Village	6:20 A.M.
St. Jerome / Sta. Susana Church, Alabang	12:15 noon
St. John The Evangelist, Tanauan City	6:15 A.M.
Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Batangas City	7:00 A.M.

SESENIO "RC" P. RAVALO

of Legaspi City

*Peacefully joined his Creator
on January 23, 2005 at the age of 64.*

Wife, Chita
Children : Immer & Cindy
Grandson, Matthew
Sisters : Rosita & Maggie
Brothers : Agustin (†), Fortunato (†),
Maximino (†), Jaime (†),
Dominador (†),
Ignacio "John", Ernesto (†), Joseph
Nieces & Nephews; Grandnieces
& Grandnephews

request the pious readers to pray for his eternal repose.

His body will be flown in on January 30, 2005 to lie at Loyola Memorial in Guadalupe.

Holy Mass will be offered on January 30, 2005 at 8:00 pm and on January 31, 2005 at 7:00 am. Cremation will follow at 8:00 am.

*"He who follows Me does not walk the path of
darkness but will have the Light of Life"*

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"Praises on stone are titles lent; a
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monument"

**"For God so loved the
world, that He gave His
only begotten Son, that
whoever believes in Him
shall not perish but have
everlasting life."**

John 3:16

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Retired Justice Jose C. Campos, Jr.

wish to convey our deepest appreciation to all of
you, our relatives and friends, who spent precious
time with us, sent flowers, mass cards, gave
donations, or in some other way expressed your
love, concern and support in celebrating *Peping's*
coming home to his Creator.

*I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*
(2 Timothy 4)

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UP Job fair, on its 2nd day

THE WEEK-LONG 16th University of the Philippines Job Fair is now on its second day. Over 97 companies are participating. Companies like PS Bank, Nestle Philippines, People Support, Kodak Philippines, Cemex-Solid Cement Corp., and the Philippine Daily Inquirer will have their company talks from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. today. You can also catch Cora Doloroso, Teletech, Accenture, Avon, Sari-Sari and Novecento tomorrow as they speak about their industries. UP students, especially the graduating students, as well as non-UP students are invited to come to this grand event at the Ang Bahay

ng Alumni, UP Campus, Diliman. The Job Fair will last until Friday at 4pm. You may bring several copies of your resume and a birth certificate and 1x1 picture for the last day of free processing of SSS number today. Different fun games and cultural presentations are also prepared. The On-the-spot Corporate Attire Design Contest is open until Friday with lots of prizes to be won. The organizers will welcome any inquiries through 9264162 / 9295835 or any of the following: 09165237987 (Dodi Ann Catalan), 09178584532 (Crystle Tan), 09205234659 (Felisa Yu).

Farmers push for increase in selling price of NFA Rice

FARMER organizations all over the country are pushing for an immediate adjustment in the government's rice selling price to prevent a drop in palay farmgate prices as the summer harvest approaches. NFA administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr. said that as early as November last year, the food agency's central and field offices have been receiving copies of urgent resolutions from numerous farmers groups sent to Malacañang and the Department of Agriculture asking President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to adjust the selling price of NFA rice. The NFA presently sells regular-milled rice (RMR) at P16/kg and well-milled rice (WMR) at P18/kg. The farmers cited several major factors for the clamor to increase the selling price of NFA rice, Tan said. One reason for the request for price increase is the escalating prices of farm inputs, especially fertilizer,

which deprive the farmers a better income from their production endeavors. With an increase in the selling price of NFA rice, grains traders and millers may also be encouraged to adjust prices of commercial rice which will ultimately benefit local farmers, they said. On December 1, 2004, the NFA had increased its palay buying price from P9/kg to P10/kg in response to the farmers' clamor to increase the support price in view of the increasing costs of production inputs. Prices of fertilizers have increased by more than 50 percent prior to the adjustment of NFA's palay procurement price. According to the farmers' resolutions, labor and post production costs continue to spiral, contributing to their expenses. All these continue to burden the ordinary Filipino farmers and their families, the farmers said.

NFA intensifies rolling stores

THE NATIONAL Food Authority (NFA) has intensified its rolling store deployment in identified depressed and thickly-populated areas in Metro Manila to ensure availability and accessibility of P16/kg rice. NFA administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr. recently instructed its field offices to deploy more rolling stores, particularly in identified "hot spot" areas in Metro Manila due to increasing demand to purchase NFA rice. He also ordered the agency's price watch team to monitor NFA rice price and supply in its accredited outlets in major and minor markets. Tan also called on the officials and members of the Confederation of Grains Retailers in the Philippines (Grecon) to police their own ranks in ensuring the stable supply and price of rice for the consumers. NFA deploys 15 rolling stores in Metro Manila, scheduled in two shifts, from morning until 4 in the afternoon, Mondays to Fridays. The food agency's rolling stores sell rice, sugar, cooking oil, easy-to-cook noodles, milk and canned goods. NFA regular milled rice (RMR) sold at P16/kg is also available at NFA licensed and accredited outlets nationwide. Meanwhile, the NFA has recently awarded the supply of 320,000 MT rice imports to five Vietnamese firms. The rice import is part of the agency's food security stocks to readily intervene on any abnormal price movements in the market. Tan said that its present rice price level can be sustained depending on the subsidy that the government will release to the agency. To report any irregularities on rice trading, the consuming public may send-in their concerns to the NFA through mobile number 0917-6210927.



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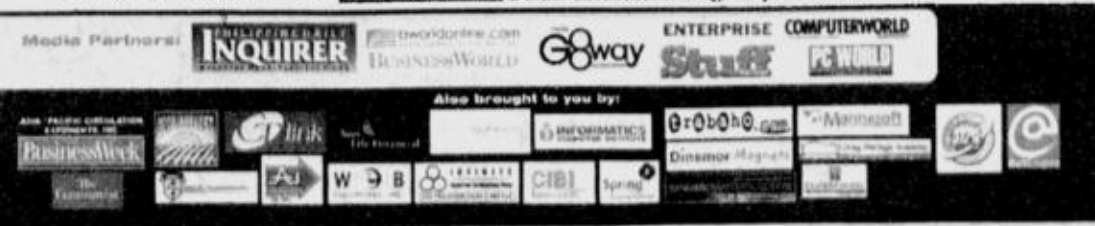
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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

BALTIMORE INT'L MOTORCYCLE SHOW

The very old, the very new and old junk made like new

Text and photos by Tessa R. Salazar

BALTIMORE, Maryland—Foot-stomping country bands, eye-popping, candy-colored two-, and three-wheeled metal contraptions, and throngs of bearded and tattooed bikers with their sexy female riders all managed to make it here despite a snowstorm that threatened to dump up to 20 inches of snow all over the US Midwest and Northeast.

Fresh from the wonders of the North American International Auto Show in Troy, Michigan, this writer was fortunate enough to pass by the Baltimore Convention Center at 1 West Pratt Street, en route to Washington D.C. for a post-Bush-Cheney inauguration tour, when she chanced upon the Baltimore International Motorcycle Show.

Filling her senses

For an entrance fee of \$15 (about P840), she was given the chance to fill her senses with the sights and sounds of powerbikes, vintage motorcycles, sophisticated gears, and meet various lovers of bikes, and people who loved bikers themselves. This yearly celebration of bikes by Baltimoreans is now on its 22nd year. The threat of snow may have thinned attendance a bit, said organizer Patrick Moran, but it still drew a good crowd. Last year, the convention center was filled four times its capacity as 40,000 bike lovers and spectators spent the entire weekend here.

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But there's nothing grotesque about its run. Davis said his bike is no "folly" and is fully operable and street legal. He claimed to have been using the bike since 1993.

Waxing philosophical and sentimental of his junkyard masterpiece, Davis said: "This bike was nothing but parts that were useless in and of themselves. Seeing beyond what it was to what it could be, those parts were lovingly made into a new, useful and unique piece of equipment—one that would find a real purpose and meaning in life."

Like a small chopper

On the other extreme was the Ecomobile, a closed space motorcycle that looks like a small chopper and said to be made of space-age composite materials. This neat-looking bike is powered by a BMW engine, which its maker says is a super turbocharged, 1171-cc BMW K model 4-cylinder with ABS. Peraves of Switzerland, its maker, claimed it uses less fuel than a mini car. However, since it is a closed-space bike, the driver may not be able to put his feet down when he stops to prevent himself from tipping over to the sides.

The solution, in this case, is the "computer-supervised electrical Servo stabilizer system with manual lowering backup" that lowers the bike at the flick of a thumb immediately when the bike comes to a stop. The system then retracts by itself when the bike exceeds 15 mph (24 kph).

Loaded with power

Another show stopper was the 3-wheeled, custom-made Apex Trikes bike. And this one is loaded with power—too much power—that one wonders why on Earth would anyone want so much speed and power packed into a tricycle, unless it hauled tons and tons of sand and gravel. Imagine a 430-horsepower, 350 cu. inch V8 engine generating 412 ft lb of mind-bending torque.

All that power is transmitted to the pavement via three huge 18.5-inch tires. Add to the intimidating looks are the two power tanks it lugs on the rear. Even just standing there, motionless, visitors could discern that this contraption could deliver "one heck of a rush," and just by looking at it, many bike riders could feel the palm of their hands turn sweaty with excitement.

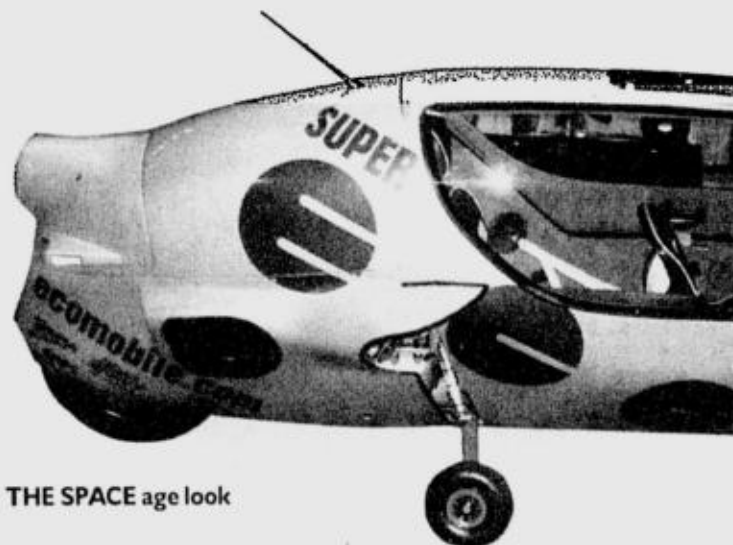
The Boss Hoss motorcycle displays, of



HELMETS looking like dinosaur eggs and other bike gear lead an interesting array of bike accessories on display.



IT'S not a chopper. It's not a space ship. It's the Ecomobile—an enclosed motorcycle powered by a BMW engine and consumes less fuel than a super mini car.



THE SPACE age look

The uncooperative weather hasn't hampered the quality of displays found at the bike show

course, were not to be outdone, with their proud production cruisers and touring bikes. Their bragging right: three to four times the power of any other production bike in the world. Boss Hoss has its Chevy V8 engine, the nostalgia and mystique of a classic cruiser and the balance and comfort of some of the finest touring bikes in the world.

More aerodynamic, more streamlined, yet safer and easier to handle, Boss Hoss bikes' low center of gravity and even weight distribution make every ounce work together for smoother, more controlled tracking of curves and city streets. Boss Hoss also brags of two-speed semi-automatic transmission with re-

verse, which gives the rider a less problematic (less cerebral, more intuitive, if we may say so), clutch-free operation.

Making their presence felt

Passionate hobbyists-motorcycle makers also made their presence felt at the show. Orange County Choppers, with its shiny sheet metals famous for its Discovery Channel features, and Abate of Maryland, attracted much attention.

Abate is a dedicated mover of the Freedom of the Road and Responsible Motorcycle Legislation. It has a host of accomplishments, including the acquired voluntary helmet use for motorcycle riders between 1979 and 1992. It repulsed a planned legislation that would prohibit children under 12 to be passengers on motorcycles, and also enacted a motorcycle safety program legislation in 1983.

Art and custom bike makers, painters and photographers from Pro Art Works, Fisher's bike specialties, Ryan Photography, Extreme Custom Cycles, Racing Concepts, Ellicott City Motorsports (carrying Yamaha, Suzuki and Kawasaki) also showcased their wares.

Seeing all these awe-inspiring motorbikes gave visitors a glimpse of the future and potentials of one of the most versatile of man's inventions. It would only be a matter of time when these showroom wonders become everyday realities in Philippine streets. By that time, this writer hopes, the country's streets would be hospitable enough, and the Filipino motoring public's minds would be sensible enough to give the motorbike its own space.

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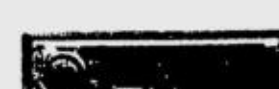
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Waxing philosophical and sentimental of his junkyard masterpiece, Davis said: "This bike was nothing but parts that were useless in and of themselves. Seeing beyond what it was to what it could be, those parts were lovingly made into a new, useful and unique piece of equipment—one that would find a real purpose and meaning in life."

Like a small chopper

On the other extreme was the Ecomobile, a closed space motorcycle that looks like a small chopper and said to be made of space-age composite materials. This neat-looking bike is powered by a BMW engine, which its maker says is a super turbocharged, 1171-cc BMW K model 4-cylinder with ABS. Peraves of Switzerland, its maker, claimed it uses less fuel than a mini car. However, since it is a closed-space bike, the driver may not be able to put his feet down when he stops to prevent himself from tipping over to the sides.

The solution, in this case, is the "computer-supervised electrical Servo stabilizer system with manual lowering backup" that lowers the bike at the flick of a thumb immediately when the bike comes to a stop. The system then retracts by itself when the bike exceeds 15 mph (24 kph).

Loaded with power

Another show stopper was the 3-wheeled, custom-made Apex Trikes bike. And this one is loaded with power—too much power—that one wonders why on Earth would anyone want so much speed and power packed into a tricycle, unless it hauled tons and tons of sand and gravel. Imagine a 430-horsepower, 350 cu. inch V8 engine generating 412 ft lb of mind-bending torque.

All that power is transmitted to the pavement via three huge 18.5-inch tires. Add to the intimidating looks are the two power tanks it lugs on the rear. Even just standing there, motionless, visitors could discern that this contraption could deliver "one heck of a rush," and just by looking at it, many bike riders could feel the palm of their hands turn sweaty with excitement.

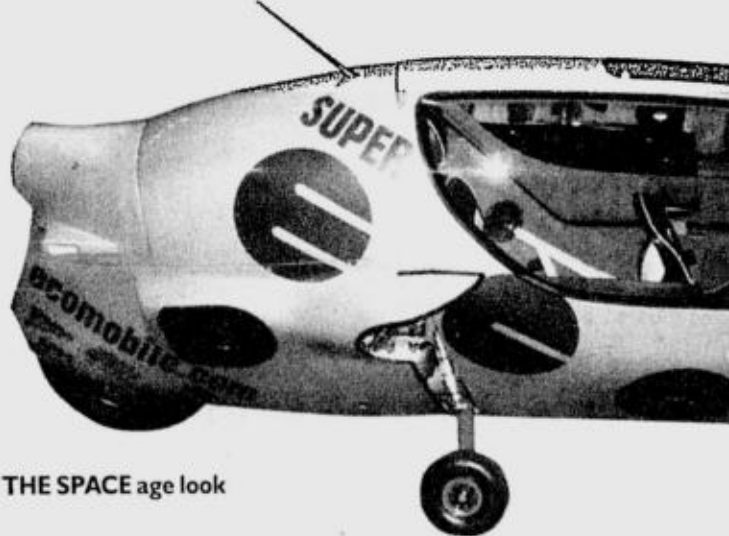
The Boss Hoss motorcycle displays, of



HELMETS looking like dinosaur eggs and other bike gear lead an interesting array of bike accessories on display.



IT'S not a chopper. It's not a space ship. It's the Ecomobile—an enclosed motorcycle powered by a BMW engine and consumes less fuel than a super mini car.



THE SPACE age look

The uncooperative weather hasn't hampered the quality of displays found at the bike show

verse, which gives the rider a less problematic (less cerebral, more intuitive, if we may say so), clutch-free operation.

Making their presence felt

Passionate hobbyists-motorcycle makers also made their presence felt at the show. Orange County Choppers, with its shiny sheet metals famous for its Discovery Channel features, and Abate of Maryland, attracted much attention.

Abate is a dedicated mover of the Freedom of the Road and Responsible Motorcycle Legislation. It has a host of accomplishments, including the acquired voluntary helmet use for motorcycle riders between 1979 and 1992. It repulsed a planned legislation that would prohibit children under 12 to be passengers on motorcycles, and also enacted a motorcycle safety program legislation in 1983.

Art and custom bike makers, painters and photographers from Pro Art Works, Fisher's bike specialties, Ryan Photography, Extreme Custom Cycles, Racing Concepts, Ellicott City Motorsports (carrying Yamaha, Suzuki and Kawasaki) also showcased their wares.

Seeing all these awe-inspiring motorbikes gave visitors a glimpse of the future and potentials of one of the most versatile of man's inventions. It would only be a matter of time when these showroom wonders become everyday realities in Philippine streets. By that time, this writer hopes, the country's streets would be hospitable enough, and the Filipino motoring public's minds would be sensible enough to give the motorbike its own space.

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Reasons to love Honda Jazz

Text and photo by Charles E. Buban

IDEALLY, we would all own a car. While each of us may be thinking different brands, makes and models, a few species would turn up regularly in our collective list.

Most of us would need a dependable set of wheels: a car that goes from "A" to "B" in style and comfort. In some cases, a car that offers more passenger or cargo space is more important for a growing family.

Enthusiasts would prefer a race car—"something fast, but more important, something responsive and fun to drive.

Recently, however, another requirement has become important as a growing number of motorists would also want to have their car posting better mileage.

And why would they want that?

Biggest worry

For consumers, rising gasoline prices are perhaps the biggest worry.

Just last year, gasoline prices in the Philippines rose 13 times for a cumulative increase of P7.45 a liter (diesel prices are no different, jumping 15 times for a total increase of P7 a liter last year).

"Since majority of car owners here in the Philippines spend most of their time driving in and around town, they now

feel the pinch of wasting their precious gasoline while idling on urban streets," shares Tintin Reyes of Honda Cars Philippines.

Honda Cars recently held a four-leg Amazing Fuel Economy Run featuring its City and Jazz units, which both run on a 1.3-liter intelligent Dual and Sequential Ignition engine (mated to either a 5-speed manual or a 7-speed continuously variable transmission).

Highways and streets

The first two legs were driven mostly on the highways (South Luzon Expressway to Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (Star) in Lipa, Batangas and North Luzon Expressway to Dau, Pampanga) while the last two were within Metro Manila's congested streets.

"The last two legs were more interesting for the participants as they were curious on how much fuel they would spend driving through similarly congested roads, which they do almost day in and day out," says Reyes.

Indeed, the perfect route to hold the most realistic fuel-efficiency driving competition is driving from Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard to Araneta Avenue in Quezon City via Edsa (the third leg), and from Edsa Pasay Road in Makati City to Quiapo streets via Quezon Avenue (the last leg).



GREEN MACHINE: Posting better mileage, Honda Jazz amply captures today's requirement of an ideal car.

Aircon on

With the air-conditioner turned on, participants applied all permissible fuel-economizing techniques as they strive to achieve the least fuel consumption.

To eliminate any possibility of tampering, Honda officials sealed each participant's fuel lid, hood, trunk and air-conditioning dials.

The entire proceedings were observed by representatives of the Automobile Association Philippines and the Department of Energy.

Satisfied

Participants were impressed with the mileage they got at the end of two races.

And who wouldn't be amazed: one Jazz unit that covered a total of 39 km

posted a 27.36 km to a liter record.

This means, the winning team completed the entire distance consuming only 1.43 liters of gasoline amid chaos and gridlock!

Results of other participants were not too far behind.

Says Reyes: "I believe the 1.3 Jazz, as well as the 1.3 City, is one of the best set of wheels out there that is not only easy to park, undemanding to drive, but one that won't require you a bank loan to cover fuel costs."

She adds that the gas mileage is just an added bonus.

Decent interior

While being a gas sipper is already a plus factor, Honda made sure it also of-

fers a decent interior that rivals bigger-size cars in passenger or cargo space.

"Apart from its eye-catching and pleasant looks, the Jazz's five-door hatchback body combines decent passenger and luggage room with short length," says Reyes.

Just like the City, the Jazz is extremely versatile when it comes to freeing up space inside the vehicle: if the rearmost luggage space is full, and you have other large objects you want to transport, all you have to do is flip up the back seats—and there is your answer.

"With even the front passenger seats similarly adjustable, you have a car that adjusts to your changing requirements, a reason the Jazz is always on one's list of favorite next car to own," reports Reyes.

Mitsubishi wins again; Jazz for you

IT IS becoming to be a habit. And this time, Mitsubishi did not only win the Dakar Rally, it also made history by becoming the first team to win five consecutive Dakar Rallies besides claiming 10 overall victories.

This is no mean feat as the world fully knows that the Dakar Rally, very often claiming casualties that sometimes result in human lives lost, is considered the toughest and most demanding cross-country event in motor sports.

As supplied to me by Arlan Reyes, the silent worker of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines, the Pajero/Montero Evolution crew of Stéphane Peterhansel and Jean-Paul Cottret claimed their second victory behind the wheel of Mitsubishi's dominant machinery, while teammates Luc Alphand and Gilles Picard finished a close second.

"I am very proud of the hard work put in by the entire team," said Isao Torii, the president of Mitsubishi Motors Motor Sports. "When I visited Atâr at the halfway point I saw the appalling working conditions the whole

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

team has faced and it is a testament to their determination that we have achieved this superb success."

Neither Peterhansel nor Alphand made any effort to outpace their rivals over in the concluding 31-km stage, both Mitsubishi Pajero/Montero Evolution crews with nearly three hours in hand to third-placed Jutta Kleinschmidt.

Peterhansel finished the stage around the Lac Rose in 11th position while Alphand was just one second adrift in 12th.

The pair arrived in an emotional and highly impressive, one-two formation at the finish of this 8,956-km, 16-leg event that was fought out over 5,431 competitive kilometers.

In the 27-year history of the world's most famous off-road rally, no manufacturer of cars, bikes

and trucks can match the Japanese company's winning record.

Akira Kijima, the managing director and head of product operations for Mitsubishi Motors and responsible for motor sport activities, said: "Mitsubishi Motors' involvement in motor sport is not merely a promotional activity, but is really at the heart of the Mitsubishi Motors brand. We feed the technology and know-how gained from our various motor sport activities directly into all our cars, also giving them a sporty spirit and desirable image. Through motor sport, our production vehicles therefore not only have improved durability and safety, but good road performance and driving capability. Mitsubishi cars have long been known for their sturdiness, endurance and robustness, and it is these qualities that are derived from our participation in motor sport. We intend to strengthen these activities and, in so doing, raise the value of the Mitsubishi Motors brand."

The 2005 Telefónica Dakar Rally began in Barcelona, Spain, on New Year's Eve and included 15 competitive sections in five countries.

The Mitsubishi Pajero/Montero Evolution crews claimed victory in five of the stages, Peterhansel winning four with Alphand taking the fastest time through the Tidjikja to Atâr section (Leg 9).

Here's good news. Ping de Jesus, the president and CEO of the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), has said the North Luzon Expressway (NLE) is 98 percent complete. MNTC is the concessionaire of the modernized NLE.

"With only 2 percent of the expressway uncompleted, its

modern features for seamless traffic is already being enjoyed by motorists at no cost to them," said Ping.

I learned that the contract period for the project is two years from Feb. 11, 2003, to Feb. 10, 2005. The contractor's completion target—September 2004—has not been met. Ping said he has asked Leighton Contractors Ltd., the NLE contractor, to redo segments to conform to world standards.

Ping has the backing of MNTC's employee representative, Parsons Brinckerhoff (the government's technical consultant), Norconsult and the Toll Regulatory Board in overseeing international quality standards through Leighton.

"A few months' wait, which would result in utmost safety of our motorists, will always be worth it," said Ping.

I agree. As the saying goes, "Better safe than sorry."

There's a secret waiting to be fully unearthed at Honda. It's the Jazz. If you haven't test-driven it yet, you are missing a lot.

It is small by world standards, but Jazz is a futuristic station wagon whose power is really amazing for its size. But don't be duped by its "smallness." Its trunk can accommodate as many as four golf bags plus one bike because of the retractable back seats. In city driving, it can easily wiggle its way out of jams and race to destinations faster than expected.

Indeed, this Jazz is just for you, particularly the yuppies and executives just starting a family.

QUOTE ME. The truth is, pedestrians contribute to traffic jams by standing on roads while waiting for, flagging, their rides.



STANDARD INSURANCE SUPPORTS CAR OF THE YEAR Standard Insurance Co. Inc. president Ernesto T. Echaz, center, (center) shakes hands with Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi) VP Aris Ilagan after signing an agreement whereby his company will be a major sponsor of the Car of the Year Awards Night at the Rockwell Tent at the Plaza, Makati, on Feb. 24. Witnessing the event are, from left, Cagi director Aida Sevilla Mendoza, Standard Insurance EVP Wivinia C. Rodriguez and Standard E-Insurance Group head Leandro Estrera.

Toyota No. 1 again in 2004

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. is the number one automotive manufacturer and retailer in 2004 based on the final sales figures last year released by the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines (Campi).

Toyota topped all categories in the market—passenger car, commercial vehicle and total sales—to achieve its self-described Triple Crown for the third year in a row. The perennial leader also captured 33 percent of the total market, registering its highest market share in 14 years.

With total market sales in 2004 reaching 88,068, the year-end sales figures marked a 5 percent decline from 2003. Despite external factors and events which affected the market, Toyota managed to further strengthen its performance by registering total sales of 29,198 reflecting an increase of 5 percent from its performance in the previous year.

Both passenger car and commercial vehicle models posted strong and consistent perfor-

mance all throughout the year benefiting from timely new variant introductions and value-based customer financing promotions Toyota implemented in 2004.

Year-end market share of Toyota reached an eight-year high of 33 percent with its nearest competitor registering a little more than 14 percent share of the market.

Stong market demand

Toyota's passenger car sales grew by 35 percent in 2004 with the strong and sustained market demand for the Vios, Altis and Camry. Its three main passenger car models led their respective categories outselling their nearest competitors despite new model introductions and heavy discounting offered by other car companies clearly displaying market preference for high product quality over affordability. Sales of Toyota's passenger cars reached a total of 15,159 units and dominated 46 percent of the market.

Kia Sportage wins Korea industrial design award

KIA Motors Corp. recently announced that its Sportage compact sport utility vehicle (SUV) has been selected for the 2004 Korea Industrial Design Award, in recognition of its innovative and attractive styling.

The Sportage, which was launched by Kia in August, is one of 10 products to be chosen for this year's award, out of 170 total entries. Since 1997, the annual Korea Industrial Design Award has been recognized as the country's foremost accolade for achievements in design by domestic manufacturing firms.

Yong-Hwan Kim, senior executive vice president and COO of

Kia Motors, said: "Aside from its performance and safety features, the immense popularity of the Sportage is due in part to its chic and sporty exterior and interior design that are well in tune with modern aesthetics." Adding to the enthusiasm, particularly among younger customers, are its cool colors such as smart blue, volcanic red and vert jade pearl.

Since the Sportage was launched, 22,346 units have been sold as of the end of November. Another 18,600 units await shipment. Kia expects to sell 104,000 units of the Sportage in overseas markets in 2005.



MITSUBISHI! made history by becoming the first team to win five consecutive Dakar Rallies.

The real "V" that stands for performance

MAINTAINING your motor vehicle in tip-top running condition, specially its engine, nowadays can be a waller-busting scenario.

If you must bust your wallet, at least make sure you're spending on well-worth products. For your lubricating needs, look in the direction of Valvoline.

You can't go wrong with Valvoline. Its engine oils are made from premium base stock and are formulated to provide extra benefits

to engines. They are always race-tested before being brought into the market to assure consistent quality, in keeping with the words of Valvoline founder Dr. John Ellis: "Quality is never an accident."

It is also not accidental that the "V" logo of Valvoline has become one of the most recognizable icons around the world. It is immediately associated with motor performance. In the top racing arenas, many

a winner use Valvoline.

Even in the consumer market, Valvoline's commitment to quality never goes unnoticed. Based on a recent survey of persons responsible for maintaining their household vehicles, Valvoline was rated one of the top brands based on "overall quality."

In fact, for nine years in a row, Valvoline motor oil is the No. 1 choice of top mechanics ... and no one knows more about motor

oil than mechanics! This is no more evident than in products or service shops that have mushroomed, trying to ride on the wings of popularity of the "V."

Valvoline is the oldest trademark in the entire petroleum industry. That head start in research and development is your guarantee that with Valvoline, you're buying the best! In hard times specially, the best is your most cost-effective choice.

Castrol Zoom nationwide promo ends Jan. 31

DON'T be left out and try to catch up with the latest race that gives a different thump and adrenaline to the motoring public.

Hundreds of participating merchants nationwide are now revving their stocks and building up their inventories as Castrol Philippines wraps up its nation-

wide text promo on Jan. 31.

All you need is buy any of the participating motorcycle oil products and take out the Castrol Zoom Club card shrink-wrapped to the product. Special benefits and juicy discounts await Castrol Zoom Club members in over 200 participating merchants in key cities all over the country.

Text-in the code found on the membership card or the alpha-numeric sticker attached to the product. Just type-in CASTROLZOOM and send to 2320 for Globe and Touch Mobile and to 309 for Smart and Talk-n-Text subscribers.

Get a chance to win a Ducati M620ie, Suzuki Raider bikes,

Canon Ixus digital cameras, Joe Rocket Alter Ego jackets and special edition Rudy Project shades by buying any of the participating Castrol motorcycle oil products: Activ 4T, GO! 4T, R4 Superbike, Power 1, Activ 2T and Go! 2T.

For details, log on to www.castrolzoomclub.com.

When you can't buy brand new

THERE is no feeling that compares with the purchase of a brand-new vehicle. This is as perfect a state as any car can be in. I personally love the "new car smell" and believe that this is a scent that should be bottled and sold either as a cabin freshener or a woman's perfume. This honeymoon period of fuss-free motoring is something that should be cherished though. Apart from the gas station, the only other place a car is predestined to visit is the repair shop. Consider the preemptive maintenance on your car, including simple 1,000-km checkup, as your reality check.

Even the most expensive and technologically advanced cars degrade and every kilometer should be viewed as a step closer to the scrap yard. Hence, as they get older, 99.9 percent of cars depreciate at a rate that would induce nose bleeding in most people. A lucky few cars are able to miraculously withstand depreciation (but not inflation) and hold their peso value, like the W113 Pagoda roof SL (Mr. Slim) of Benz and the fun little MX5 Roadster (Miata) of Mazda.

Why take the depreciation when you can have someone else take the hit for you? Given that all cars will eventually need maintenance, in some form or another, it makes sense to try to look for vehicles that, despite not being new, present good value. Logically, there should be cars out on the market that have been maintained well and not driven into the ground by their owners. Alas, as with all things in life, this proposition is not that simple. I'm willing to bet that the process of buying secondhand cars was one of the evils released into the world when Pandora opened her box.

Research

The first step in buying a secondhand vehicle is research. This begins with checking the leading dailies' Classified Ads Section or a reputable car trading publication. This will give you a general idea of a vehicle's market value. Be thorough, as there are statistical "outliers" in the Classifieds. These are people asking too much or too little for their vehicles, and also the unscrupulous who try to manipulate pricing with bogus or fictitious ads. Call those that are in budget and get the pertinent information about the vehicle like ownership, mileage, color and the ever-important last digit of the vehicle's plate number (or "ending plate" in car trader pidgin English).

The process now becomes more tedious

CATCH MY DRIFT



Andre Palma

and time-consuming, as it's time to visually inspect each and every vehicle that passed the previous screening. This is a good time to bring a friend so as to get a third party opinion of the car. I like to play a "good cop" or "bad cop" routine when checking cars out, meaning someone looks for all the good attributes of the car in question, while the other tries to find the car's problems.

Ask a lot of questions of the seller, such as service history and other work that has been done to the vehicle. Look to see the supporting documents of any such claims such as "casa maintained" (meaning serviced at the dealer) and "first owner" (meaning the seller bought the vehicle brand new from said

"casa"). Check if the general wear and tear of the vehicle matches with the mileage on the odometer. Bald tires and a sun-faded paint job are not the marks of a vehicle with only 11,000 kilometers of use.

Test drive

Please insist on a test drive, as anyone not willing to do so, is probably hiding something. Remember, cars are meant to be driven and not admired in your garage.

That new paint job and bling-bling wheels might be there to distract you from serious engine or suspension problems. If you can, have the vehicle inspected by a shop that is acceptable to both buyer and seller. Make your decision only after all your issues have been addressed and the car passes muster.

Fair value

Your haggling and negotiation skills will probably come into play next as both parties decide on what should be a fair value of the vehicle. Be firm with an initial offer and

know how much you are willing to really spend for the car.

My final step before forking over the payment is getting an updated Police Clearance for the vehicle. Most people only do this as part of the process of changing ownership at the Land Transportation Office (LTO). It is best to be prudent, as you would not want to hand over your "new" car to the PNP for impounding and eventual return to its rightful owner.

There is no shortcut to the method of finding a good secondhand car on the open market. The process, though daunting, is not impossible; as proven by the droves of second-hand car dealers and "car exchanges" that dot the cityscape. They would not be in business if there was no profit to be made. Taking the time to rigorously scour and scout often results in being able to find an acceptable vehicle specimen that can be taken home and called your own.

For comments, e-mail the author at scan-dy@flick@yahoo.com.

I like to
play a
'good cop'
or 'bad cop'
routine
when
checking
cars out



THE NEW BMW X3 Sport Edition

BMW Xpo launched

BMW jumpstarts 2005 with exciting products, entertainment and fabulous deals at all authorized BMW dealerships in the country.

The BMW Xpo, a weeklong dealer-based customer event celebrated from Jan. 21 to 30, will feature BMW's latest model line-up. These include the recently unveiled X3 Sport Edition and the new BMW 1 Series.

At the same time, customers can experience the "connectivity" of the 1 Series through BMW's cooperation with Smart Addict Mobile and HP. The new BMW 1 Series is equipped with an input channel for auxiliary devices such as selected MP3 players and handheld organizers. As such, BMW owners can connect their HP iPAQ Pocket PCs directly with their 1 Series cars to play music or make hands-free mobile phone calls.

Exclusive offer

Customers can also take advantage of BMW's exclusive offer on the multi-awarded BMW 3 Series—0 percent interest for 5 years for as low as 30 percent down payment. This is the longest interest-free term being offered in the market today.

Those who experience the latest BMW models during a test drive will have a chance to win exciting prizes such as BMW Memory Sticks, high-end Nokia and Motorola mobile phones from Smart Addict Mobile and Formula One jackets from HP.

The BMW Xpo will be held in five authorized BMW dealers nationwide, namely Prestige Cars BMW (Makati), Autozentrum BMW (Alabang), Autohaus BMW (Quezon City), Premier Cars BMW (Pampanga) and Performance BMW (Cebu).

Fun drive to Pampanga

THE VIOS Club Philippines invites all Toyota Vios owners to come and join their fun drive to Pampanga on Saturday, Jan. 29.

Assembly time is 12 noon at Toyota Balintawak. Be a member of one of the fastest-growing auto clubs.

Sign up, share notes, show your ride, meet new friends and have lots of fun.

Join the Vios Club Philippines now. For details, log on at www.viosclubphil.com.

Buy a Nissan Frontier or Patrol now and you could win 1 Million!

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* Subject to bank approval. Bank financing scheme available through East West Bank and DTI Family Savings Bank only.

Promo period is from January 17 to April 15, 2005.

See posters for details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0213 Series of 2005.

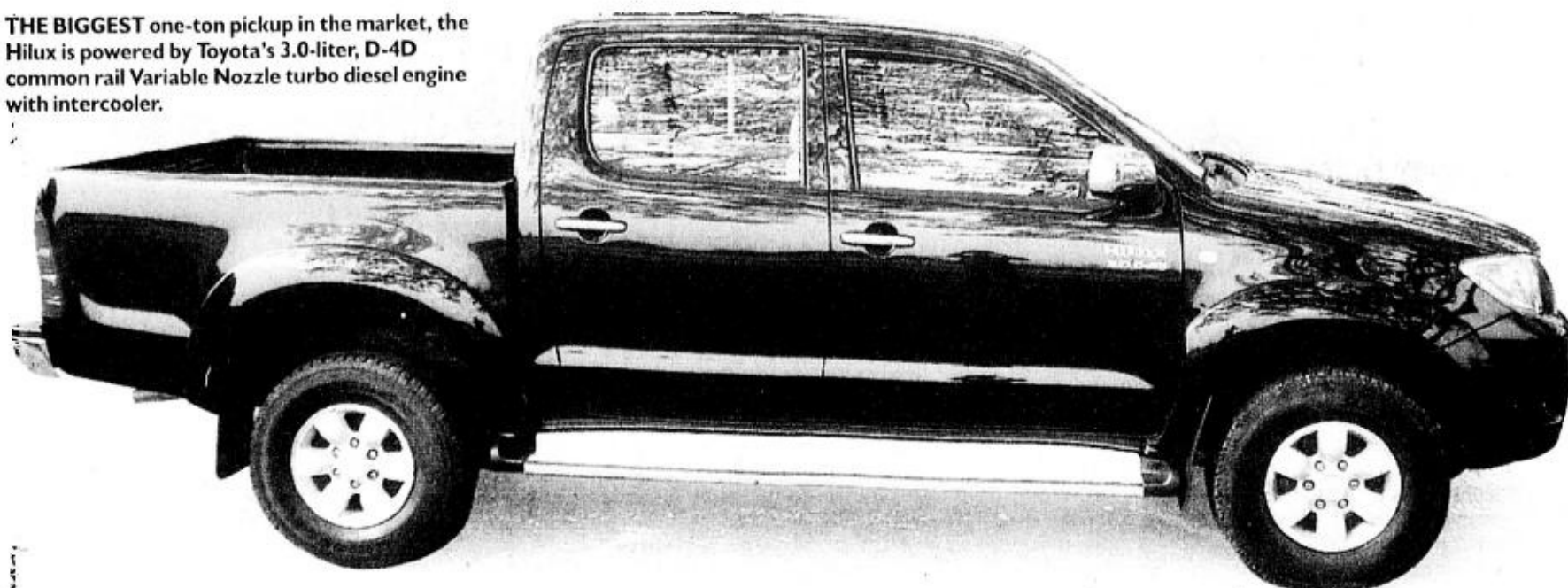
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THE BIGGEST one-ton pickup in the market, the Hilux is powered by Toyota's 3.0-liter, D-4D common rail Variable Nozzle turbo diesel engine with intercooler.



The biggest, fastest diesel pickup

JUST when everyone thought that the race for pole position in the diesel pickup market was exclusively between the Nissan Frontier and the Isuzu D-Max, Toyota entered the fray with its all-new Hilux. Not only is the new Hilux the biggest in the one-ton pickup class, it is powered by the most technologically advanced diesel engine, the D-4D common rail 3.0-liter, 4-cylinder, 16-valve DOHC Variable Nozzle (VN) Turbo with intercooler, capable of 163 ps / 3,400 rpm max output and 343 Nm/1,400 to 3,200 rpm max torque. And, to make matters more worrisome for its competitors, the new Hilux is a strikingly handsome brute.

Launched as a CBU from Thailand last Dec. 4, the Hilux is the first of several Innovative Multipurpose Vehicles (IMV) that Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. intends to introduce here. The IMV Project represents the new global quality approach of Japan's foremost carmaker in designing, manufacturing and developing motor vehicles that would exceed the expectations of customers around the world. Aside from Thailand and the Philippines, the new Hilux is sold in Indonesia and Malaysia and will soon be available in South Africa and Middle Eastern countries.

Longer

The first thing you notice about the new Hilux is that not only does it look bigger, it is much longer than other pickup trucks. The top-of-the-line Hilux I test-drove for a week, the P1.305 million 4 x 4 "G" model with 4-speed gate-type automatic transmission, has an overall length of 5,255 mm, or 260 mm longer than the D-Max and 215 mm longer than the Frontier. The Hilux is also wider and

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza



taller than those two, but only by less than 100 mm in each dimension.

The Hilux's class-leading overall length translates into bigger cargo space, a roomier interior, increased legroom and headroom, wider seats, and wide-opening doors that ease ingress and egress for driver and passengers alike. On the other hand, it also translates into a bigger turning radius and less maneuverability when parking. When you reverse the Hilux into a parking slot, while looking back over your right shoulder you have to stand up from the driver's seat in order to see the tip of the cargo box's right corner and thereby gauge the parking distance. For short (I am 5 feet 4 inches tall) people like me, the Hilux is one vehicle that truly needs a rear parking sensor.

Viewed from the front, the Hilux appears as aggressive and as macho as a truck should, with angled multireflector halogen headlights and fog lamps plus a racy-looking hood scoop. Chrome grip-type door handles, chrome sideview mirrors, chrome side steps and a chrome rear bumper enhance the sporty image, but the 255/70 R15 tires look rather small for the biggest one-ton pickup in the market. The Hilux is the only pickup with a tailgate-mounted stop lamp on the same level as the multireflector rear lamps.

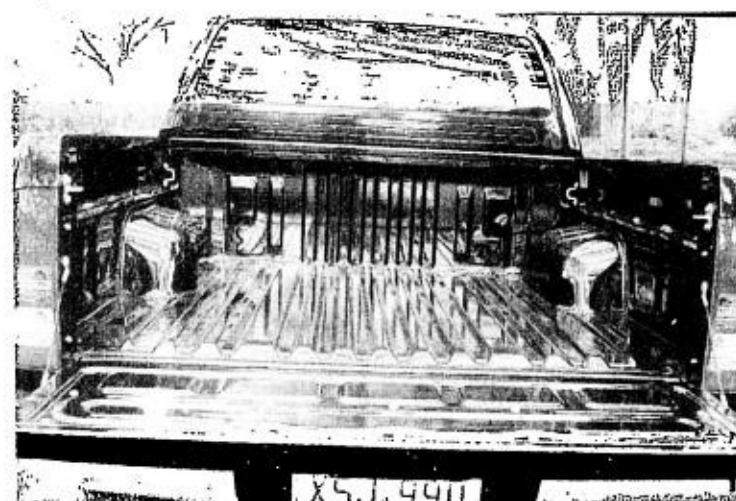
Faster

The two-tone color-coordinated interior is more minimalist than luxurious, although there is an in-dash CD, MP3 player and cassette with six speakers. It is when you drive the Hilux that you get to recognize and appreciate its most outstanding value. Although the Hilux is the biggest in its class, it is also the



MINIMALIST, rather than luxurious ergonomics are found in the Hilux's cockpit, yet the cabin is comfortable and carlike with cupholders and storage bins galore.

PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA



AS THE LONGEST pickup in the market, the Hilux offers much bigger cargo space, naturally.



WIDE-OPENING doors, wider seats, increased legroom and headroom are made possible by the Hilux's super size.

fastest, thanks to Toyota's superb D-4D second generation common rail diesel engine. I have driven other vehicles propelled by common rail direct-injection diesel powerplants before—such as the BMW 530d sedan—and enjoyed the quiet, exhilarating performance and absence of vibration and engine noise. So I was glad to experience it again, this time in a pickup truck. Despite its heft and length, the Hilux is facile to drive at highway speeds, its smooth-shifting automatic tranny with ECT and rack and pinion steering system being contributing factors, no doubt.

The 2005 Hilux's new suspension—double wishbone with coil springs and stabilizer in front and rigid axle, leaf springs at the rear—provides a somewhat bouncy ride when there are no passengers and no load in the cargo box. But that is to be expected of any truck. On the plus side, Toyota succeeded in building a comfortable carlike cabin that isolates the Hilux's occupants from road noise and other unpleasant sounds.

Off-road

In the ads and sales brochures of the Hilux, Toyota makes no direct reference to its off-road capability. Perhaps it's because Toyota knows its market well: the majority of 4x4 vehicle buyers hardly, if ever, drive off-road. Unlike the D-Max, which has shift-on-the-fly push buttons on the instrument panel, the Hilux's 4WD system is activated manually via a stick shift.

In terms of safety features, the Hilux is as minimalist as its interior design. The Hilux G has a driver side SRS airbag but none to protect the front passenger, while the 4x2 "E" and "J" variants have none at all. No antilock braking system can be found in any of the Hilux models. Bottom line, the Hilux G's strongest selling points are its powerful yet fuel-efficient 3.0-liter D-4D common rail diesel engine, its super size making possible the roomiest interior and, of course, Toyota's reliability. Watch the Hilux grab market share from its rivals.

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: If winning isn't everything, why do they keep score? —Vince Lombardi

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph)

ALL-NEW MERCEDES-BENZ CLS-CLASS

4-door coupé that's a generation ahead

ON TOP of remaining to be the world's most luxurious car brand, Mercedes-Benz continues to prove that it's still at the forefront of automotive innovation. It's latest model, the Mercedes-Benz CLS-Class four-door coupé is yet another one of those triumphs. This time, Mercedes-Benz is combining the elegance of a coupé and the comfort and practicality of a saloon.

Launched last October in Stuttgart, Germany, the car is hitting the streets of Manila this month.

The predecessor to the new CLS-Class was a coupé study that Mercedes-Benz presented at the Frankfurt Motor Show in autumn

2003. The enthusiastic public response to this four-door coupé inspired the management in Stuttgart to give the green light for a series production.

The result is a combination of Mercedes' two models' very significant facets. The owner of a CLS-Class unit can rely on spaciousness, big luggage capacity and day-to-day practicality and at the same time look smashing handsome with the car's top-of-the-line design. With this currently unique combination, the new CLS-Class is one coupé generation ahead.

Comfort, spaciousness

The four-door coupé concept

allows passengers in the rear convenient access and egress. Two comfortable single seats allow them to enjoy generous freedom of movement. The rear seats are placed at a distance of 829 mm from the front. And together with the shoulder and elbow-level width (1,422 and 1,464 mm, respectively in the rear) clearly makes the CLS-Class a saloon.

Plus, newly developed seats with electric adjustment as standard are available for the driver and front passenger. On request, these can be equipped with active ventilation or as a dynamic multi-contour seat.

Furthermore, the boot of the

new CLS-Class holds up to 505 liters (VDA measuring method)—much more than any other coupé and saloon.

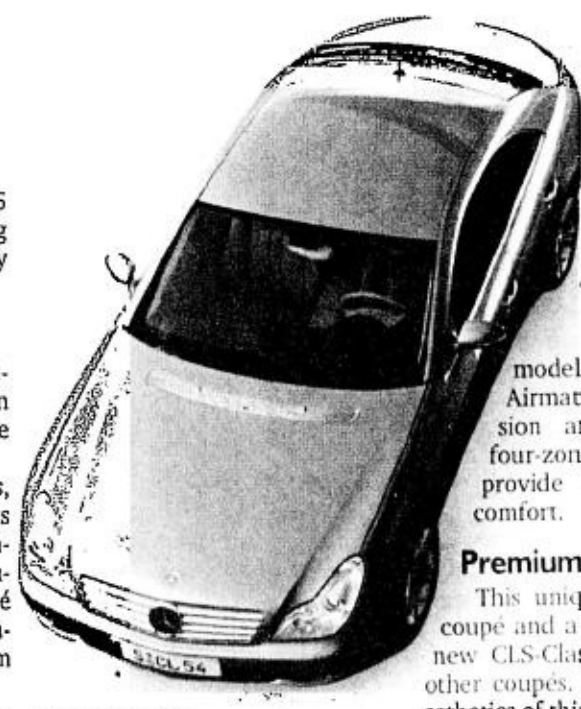
Premium safety

The CLS-Class is technically superior in that its specifications in its engine and safety devices are intelligently designed.

It has adaptive front airbags, sidebags, windowbags, as well as belt tensioners and belt force limiters on all seats. In the near future, the new Mercedes Coupé will be equipped with the preventive occupant protection system called Pre-Safe.

The new CLS-Class has a Sensotronic Brake Control (SBC) and the latest-generation Electronic Stability Program (ESP) as standard. Other standards include the powerful bi-xenon headlamps with Headlamp Assist, which Mercedes-Benz now combines with cornering lights as well as an access and drive authorization system Keyless-Go.

A number of other innovations are also optionally available for the four-door coupé to make driv-



THE OWNER of a CLS-Class unit can rely on spaciousness, big luggage capacity and day-to-day practicality,

model features such as Airmatic DC air suspension and Thermotronic four-zone climate control provide S-Class levels of comfort.

Premium comfort

This unique synthesis of a coupé and a saloon makes the new CLS-Class steps ahead of other coupés. The sophisticated esthetics of this coupé design, the exclusive appointments and the trailblazing technology are particularly aimed at people who have a passion for motor cars and motoring.

The new Mercedes-Benz CLS-Class is now available at the CATS Motors Inc. showrooms at the Fort Bonifacio CATS Motors Inc., 32nd St. cor Rizal Drive, Bonifacio Global City, and at 1008 Edsa Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila.

ing even safer.

Premium power

The engine range includes two powerful gasoline units: in the CLS 350 a newly developed V6 with 200 kW/272 hp and in the CLS 500 a muscular eight-cylinder unit with 225 kW/306 hp.

Both engines are partnered with the new seven-speed automatic transmission, 7G-Tronic, as standard. In the top CLS 500



THE MERCEDES-BENZ CLS-Class four-door coupé



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2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
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#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING

MEG
CABOTauthor of *The Boy Next Door*

Every Boy's Got One

"Cabot's fans will devour this fluffy, fun urban fairy tale." —Publishers Weekly



PHOTO BY RUDY ESPERAS

By Pam Pastor

THE BLACKBERRY pager plays an important role in Meg Cabot's latest offering, "Every Boy's Got One." The four main characters each own a unit and a lot of the story is told through messages sent using their Blackberry pager.

It can be said that the gadget was a key player in the book—just as it was a key player in my life for a few weeks.

I have to admit, it wasn't technological at first sight.

But just an hour spent with the precious Blackberry 6230 was enough to bowl me over.

Imagine being able to receive your e-mails anywhere, anytime, without having to sit in front of a computer or carry your laptop around. That is what I call Blackberry magic.

The first thing I did after getting the Blackberry was to create a new e-mail address, with the help of some angels from Globe. You can incorporate your old ones as well, but since it was a temporary set-up, I chose not to.

Because I knew that my time with the Blackberry would be wasted unless I started getting swamped with mail, I decided to post the new e-mail address on my website and ask people to lend me a hand by sending an e-mail my way.

I asked them to tell me about their day, their life, their fears, dreams and nightmares. I asked about their secrets, the people in their life.

Soon, messages were pouring in. But people around me were still a bit apprehensive.

My brother, who is left-handed, mentioned that the Blackberry's scroll isn't exactly leftie-friendly. Point taken.

My boyfriend, a big tech freak himself, just rolled his eyes at me, saying that he could access his Yahoo mail with GPRS anyway. The rolling stopped, though, when I showed him that the Blackberry allows me to download and open attachments.

And unlike your normal GPRS-capable mobile phone, the Blackberry pager allows your e-mails come in like text messages would.

Inseparable

The Blackberry became my constant companion. It was my connection to the outside world—a mobile phone and e-mail station rolled into one.

Soon, it was as if the unit was glued to my hands. I cannot count the number of times my boyfriend had to give me the please-put-that-gadget-away-we're-in-the-middle-of-a-date speech.

We were simply inseparable. I whipped it out while stuck in traffic. It stayed with me during trips to the mall and during hours at the cinema. I made time pass on long road trips by answering e-mails. During one pit stop, I was surprised to receive mail from an old grade school friend who left our school in sixth grade. Catching up was made easy by Blackberry magic.

The unit gave me the gift of convenience, the ability to reach out to the world no matter where I was. It was easy to send out work-related e-mails. I didn't even have to apologize for the lack of structure, which I normally had to do when using Yahoo on GPRS.

During mobile phone reviews, I always have one big question: can it be a replacement for my own phone?

Will I be able to abandon what I have gotten used to and what I love and use this new gadget without the support of my old one? Can it fulfill what I demand from my own phone and not leave me wanting?

With the Blackberry, the answer was yes. It was easy to use, despite people's misgivings about the tiny QWERTY keyboard. And despite its size, even long phone conversations are comfortable. I should know, I tried it.

Celebrity fans

My fling with the Blackberry turned me into an instafan.

And apparently, I'm not the only one.

According to USA Today, 2005 is going to be an even bigger year for Blackberry, "the popular e-mail pager that's become a must-have equipment for movers in Hollywood and Washington and on Wall Street. Addicted users refer to it as "CrackBerry."

In fact, in a study by branding firm Landor Associates and research firm Penn, Schoen & Berland in the United States, Blackberry is number one on the list of things that are going to be hot in 2005. The list also includes Google, iPod, "Desperate Housewives" and Oprah.

Apparently, the Blackberry pager has a loyal fan base of celebrities and politicians. Matthew Broderick was seen showing off his new unit while promoting "The Stepford Wives" last year. Even Oprah is a fan. In 2003, she numbered the Blackberry pager among her favorite things for Christmas.

"This has literally changed my life. You don't have to be at your computer to send or receive an e-mail. It sends and receives e-mail messages like a cell phone. It has literally freed me," she said on the show.

Of course, 350 lucky audience members went home with their own pagers. Just last week, someone stole Paris Hilton's Blackberry and started reading her e-mails. A source gave MSNBC's Jeannette Wells a laughable quote: "She was pretty upset about it. It's one thing to have people looking at your sex tapes, but having people reading your personal e-mails is a real invasion of privacy."

Celebrity or no celebrity, it cannot be denied that this gadget has power.

Web test

The official website of the Blackberry pager (www.blackberry.com) has a test that people can use to gauge their need for this productivity tool. (Do you receive time-sensitive e-mail, or more than 15 e-mail messages per day? How much time do you spend away from your desk? Are you, or is your job, dependent on e-mail? Do you need flexible ways to stay in touch with friends and colleagues? Would you benefit from having access to your e-mail and the Web while on the go?)

Take the test. You may not know it yet, but your lifestyle might just be crying out for a double dose of Blackberry magic.

Globe Telecom and Research In Motion have made available the BlackBerry® wireless platform through GlobeSolutions, a unit of Globe Telecom specializing in wireless services, rate plans and handset packages for corporate needs. BlackBerry operates on Globe Telecom's GSM/GPRS network and includes international roaming capabilities.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

'But he is kind of cute. I mean, if you like the tall, rugged, sandy-haired, razor-stubbled-with-piercing-blue-eyes-who-knows-how-to-use-a-Blackberry type' — Jane Harris, *Every Boy's Got One*

Blackberry cheesecake

This gadget has moved beyond just being a wireless tool for communication, it's becoming a pop culture staple

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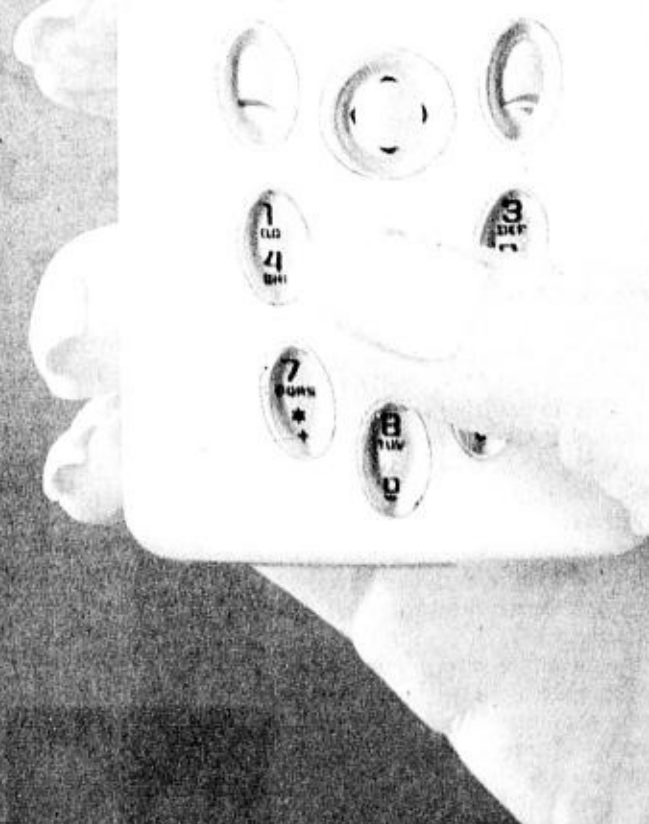
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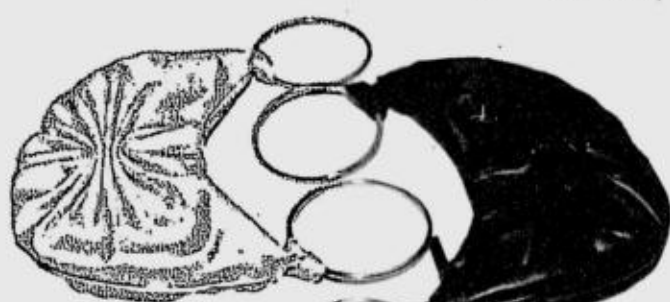


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See posters for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2105, Series of 2004.



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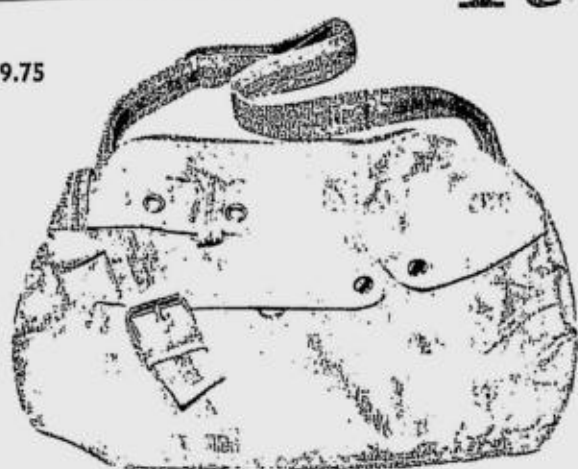


AVENUE in Arctic Silver and Traffic Black, P579.75 each

KREMLIN in Black Citadel, P579.75



KREMLIN in Soviet Blue, P579.75



It's in the bag

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Rudy Esperas

BANANA Peel invaded our subconscious and our wardrobes with its line of extra-colorful, ultra-affordable flip flops. With the countless designs and color combinations available, and with prices falling under a hundred pesos, it was no big surprise that people started snatching them up like they had more than two feet.

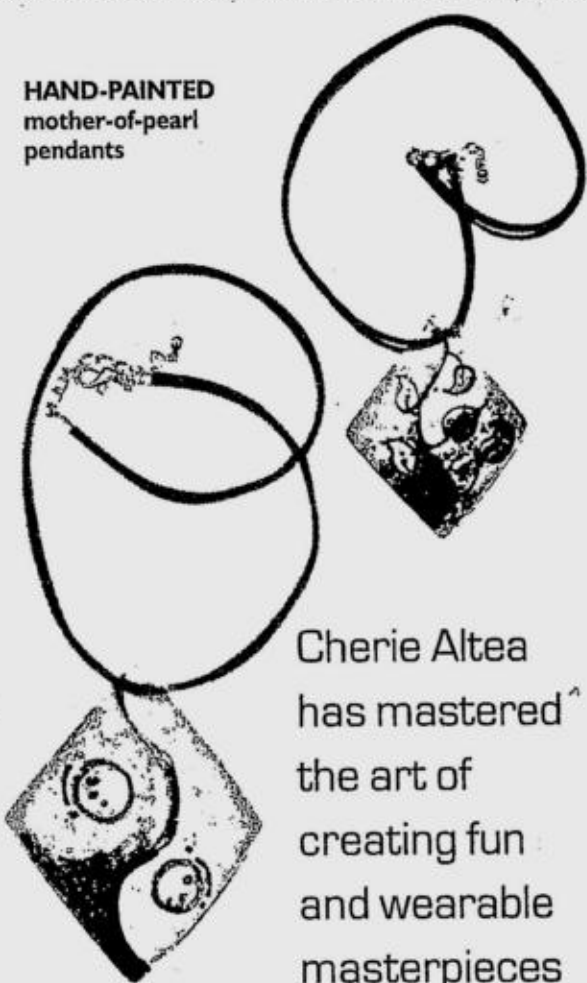
Now, Banana Peel gives us fashion freaks new reasons to whip out the cash with its new bag line, which features three designs and a rainbow of colors to choose from.



AVENUE in Yellow Cab and Madison Pink, P579.75 each

The designs: Avenue (a hobbling handles) feminine and toned colored, exterior pocket) for day and comfortable that can be worn shoulder with closure and into you want to have to lug a lot. The colors are

HAND-PAINTED mother-of-pearl pendants



Cherie Altea has mastered the art of creating fun and wearable masterpieces

2BU! FASHION FREAKS

Hot looks from a sketchbook

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Rudy Esperas

LIKE MANY other things, it all started in the classroom.

When boredom hit, Cherie Altea would find herself drawing. "It kept me sane," she says. Friends recognized her artistic skills and were soon asking her to make hand-drawn stationery and cards that they could give to their loved ones.

Cherie's passion for art continued to grow even as she progressed from student to teacher. And it's not just art—it's functional art.

"I wasn't satisfied with just drawing on paper and canvas. I wanted to paint on an unconventional material," she says.

The answer came to her one day, while walking along Session Road. "That's when I first bought my first mother-of-pearl pendant. I took it home and wondered if I could put a drawing on it."

Cherie gave it a shot. The result was her first hand-painted pendant. It was a hit.

"I wore it for kicks. I was running errands in Greenbelt when two girls on separate incidents followed me to ask where I bought it," she recalls.

It wasn't long before her friends started clamoring for her to start selling her pendants. She finally relented in November 2004, when she started churning out pendant designs based on her sketches.

By December, without any attempts at marketing or advertising, she had sold over

a hundred pendants.

"It was through sheer word of mouth. That's when I realized that there is a market for my colorful artwork," says Cherie.

Knowing that people are walking around wearing her fun, bold and vibrant designs is validation for this 27-year-old artist who used to feel insecure about her craft.

Cherie is continually creating new designs. No doubt about it, her sketchbooks still have a lot of surprises in store for us.

Call Cherie at 0917-6230469 or e-mail cheriealtea@yahoo.com.

Do you want the Fashion Freaks to visit your store or see your wares? E-mail us at thefashionfreaks@yahoo.com.



GUCCI CRUISE. Grace Tagle and Gary Dulatas



VA VA VOOM. Vina Morales and Greg Martin



CRUISE CAPTAINS. Mahesh Mirpuri and Carlo Tirona



BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN. Chris Peterson and girlfriend Sarah



G'DAY MATE! Joyce Jimenez, off to study in Australia, here with Ton Manlongat



NOT YOUR ORDINARY. Rich Herrera and Kat

Twisted sobriety



ADDICTED TO EACH OTHER. Borgy Manotoc and Ormusa Cadness at Gucci



G STAR. Georgina Wilson, niece of Gloria Diaz, and not Marge Moran-Florendo as we wrote before

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP



YOUNG GUN GURU. Mark Reyes and Trent Frankum

LAST week, I made an experiment.

I still stuck to my daily routine of nocturnal navigation, hopping from one exciting event to another, doing the rounds and partying hard like a rock star.

So, what's the catch? I did it—sober.

Yes, without the assistance of anything—alcohol, upper or anything that could alter my state.

I've always had a natural high. Call me a cheap date, but I remember the time when I would go out and have just a few drinks (two glasses of wine, at the most) to last me the whole night till the next morning.

Since life is about cycles, I decided to go back to that state and see how I would fare.

This time, I tried to totally cut alcohol from my system. That's not easy when it happens during your birthday week (I call it my birthday season, because I celebrate it 20 times, spread across the whole quarter), when everyone just throws drinks at you.

Everywhere you go in the city (if you come late enough and people are already drunk), some generous inebriated soul will surely offer you a drink, a shot or a bump.

Rest, not quit

Speaking of bumps, I recently bumped into a close partyphile and told him about my experiment.

"I quit," I said in a positive tone, head higher than Nancy



Tim Yap

Reagan during her "Just Say No" campaign season.

"No. Don't say quit—you might eat your words. Say 'rest,'" he said.

That made a lot of sense. It follows the "everything in moderation" mantra. Then again, when is moderate moderate? Just like reaching for the horizon, that imaginary line that gets further the more we get closer, sometimes, people can be insatiable (actually, all the time).

So I told myself, okay—ready, get set—rest.

Much as I advocate the "Fun! Fun! Fun! Party! Party! Party!"



GUYS' NIGHT OUT. GJ Dee and Marcel Crespo

I went back to the gym, slept earlier than usual (3 a.m.), and made fruit juice and diet soda my best friends



RATED Rufa Mae Quinto



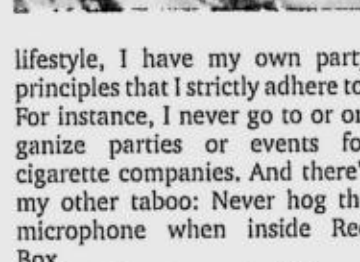
SINGING SENSATION. Savannah Lumen is back in town!



STARE SPECIALISTS. Ricky Delgado, Blanca Valerio and Anton Huang



SO HAPPY TOGETHER. Mike Huang and girlfriend Kathy Yap



DJ IT IN THE HOUSE. Joe Tantoco at the pool party

best friends.

Well, there is the "boring" life appeal. In an open bar is more the exception, we get calls from friends, new friends, leagues and the go out and "indulging sober has a new adventure."

Knowing you don't on any for make the night new perspective character. Eddie the party scene chronicler, has decades now.

him from taking having a ball as he goes to.

Scene staple and Juan Eliza out alcohol from diets, and yet the joy the party.

Marcel Crespo alcohol but has form of illegal life, would

lifestyle, I have my own party principles that I strictly adhere to. For instance, I never go to or organize parties or events for cigarette companies. And there's my other taboo: Never hog the microphone when inside Red Box.

The following week (this was the week after the Gucci cruise collection launch and Vina Morales' penthouse pool party, as seen on this page), I made sure to stay away from everything—except great people.

The 'boring' life

I went back to the gym, slept earlier than usual (3 a.m.), and made fruit juice and diet soda my

Banana Peel's new bag line features three designs and a rainbow of colors to choose from

are fun and functional. There's a bag accentuated with metal for days when you're feeling girly, Boulevard (a chic, two-colored tote with adjustable handgrips and an interior zip pocket that require you to be casual), and Kremlin (a body bag worn across the body or on the back with two exterior pockets, top zip pocket for days when you're main stylish even when you're of things around. yummy. Russian Brown. Sovi-

KREMLIN in Russian Brown and Cathedral Pink, P579.75 each



et Blue. Moscow Green. Black Citadel. Vodka Orange. Cathedral Pink. Sunset Teal. Morino Orange. Artie Blue. Betty Black. Joe Red. Pink Norman. Olive Max. Artie Silver. Traffic Black. Broadway White. Yellow Cab. Madison Pink.

And with prices ranging from P579 to P699, bag-crazy barbies can start their new Banana Peel collection pronto.

First Banana Peel had flip flops, now it has bags. We're wondering what it'll think of next.

Banana Peel flip flops and bags are available at The Banana Peel Store at Market! Market! 2/F, Fashion Market, Fort Bonifacio Global City (8867488). For wholesale inquiries contact Neat Incorporated at GBW Building, 341 Quezon Ave., QC, or call 711-0551; 0917-8472033.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.



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something about that has its own environment where the rule than where every week in our college bud- friends, col- usual party set to elge, indulge," be- actually become a

are not depen- of inebriates to fly gives a whole to a facet of your e Boy Escudero, 's resident visual been sober for it hasn't stopped great images and all the functions

Bianca Araneta de decided to cut in their nocturnal ey continue to en-

po, who enjoys his never taken any substance in his retort—whenever

"high flyers" pointed out to him a beautiful sky in their enhanced state—"But the sky IS beautiful!" "It feels sooo good," they would tell him. "But I feel good!" He'd respond.

Super! columnist Tals Diaz, in her latest trip to Mexico, did a similar experiment. For three days, she cut out everything, including caffeine and cigarettes, and had a weird feeling that she soon realized was sobriety.

"It was awkward at first, but it made me realize that I can have fun, no matter what, and wherever I am," she says.

I am not pontificating. I still believe that everyone has a choice on how they would like to party and paint the town.

Discretion is always key. Everyone is entitled to his or her poison of choice, but let's not forget, it's not about how many bottles of booze you consume or how many pills your body can take.

It's about how well you can enjoy life in whatever state, knowing full well that, to borrow the law of inertia, every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

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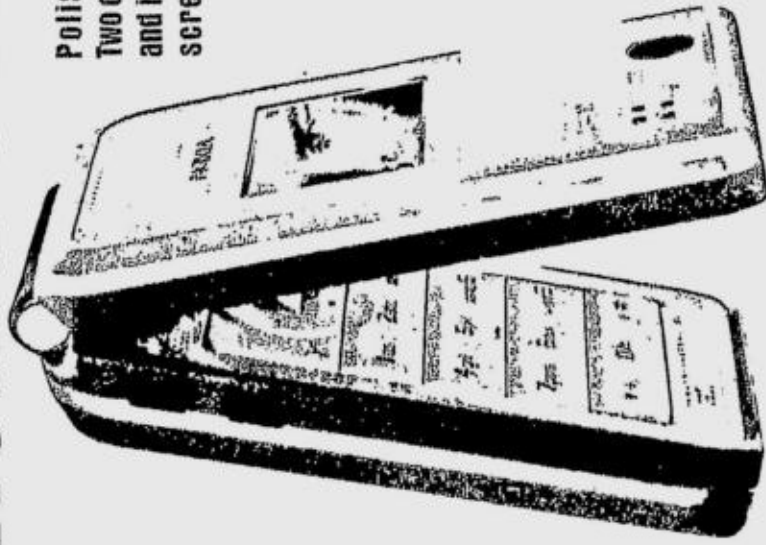
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C4

Seminars for student leaders

TAVOLO di Studio, the study club of Tanglaw University Center, in collaboration with Daniw Study Center, is organizing a series of leadership seminars focusing on Character Building Saturdays until February 2005.

Since November, Probe Productions President Ms Cheche Lazaro and DSWD Secretary Dinky Soliman have already given their talks.

Philippine Daily Inquirer President Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez will be speaking on Jan. 29; and Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. on Feb. 26.

Around 150 of the best female student leaders from UP, Ateneo, UST, La Salle, UA&P and other top universities in Metro Manila will participate in the leadership seminars.

The speakers will share with the students their ideas and experience on what real success is all about and how one can achieve it, what they think are the most important characteristics a leader should possess, and on what university students can contribute to social progress, especially in their own fields of expertise.

Considering the limited slots available, preliminary interviews of prospective participants are being conducted. Interested participants may get in touch with any of the following: Almira Tumibay (372-4008 to10); Cristy Aure (711-8453); Judith Lumbao (525-7574); or, Minnie Gabutina (929-0132, 426-0145; 0919-3428717). For further details, call or, email at daniw_center@yahoo.com.

A minimal seminar fee of P200/participant will be charged for the entire series to be paid in full upon registration.

The seminars will be held at Tanglaw University Center, 54 Examiner St. West Triangle, Quezon City, at 10am.

Tanglaw University Center provides an opportunity for highly motivated young women to widen their professional and cultural knowledge, develop their character to the full, realize the spiritual dimension of their existence, and be persons more conscious of their social responsibility.

Activities in the center include rural and urban service projects, catechism and tutorial programs for children, study seminars, professional development talks, concerts, get-togethers and excursions. Tavolo di Studio is one of the center's clubs that promote academic excellence and character building among university students, aiming to help them become competent and service oriented professionals in the future.

ENTERTAINMENT Metro

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SHOW OF FRIENDSHIP. Regine says the show is "a celebration of my friendship with Pops"



WOMEN'S WORLD. Pops says they "will sing about women's sentiments, fantasies, and passions"

'Concert Queen,' 'Songbird' together

A NIGHT to remember" is how Regine Velasquez describes her forthcoming concert with Pops Fernandez.

Velasquez, dubbed Asia's Songbird, says exciting production numbers, fabulous costumes and the many "firsts" that the show promises to deliver will bear her out.

The concert is billed as "Queens ... on Fire." Organizers point out that this

is the first time Velasquez and Fernandez, who wears the title "Concert Queen," are appearing together to perform duets.

It is also the first show that will have two musical directors onstage.

"I'm so excited!" gushes Velasquez. "We're going for as many music genres as possible—rock, pop, disco. We figured that having two musical directors, Raul Mitra and Homer Flores, working side by side

was the best way to achieve that. I can see that based on the rehearsals, it's going to be pure magic."

As for 70 percent of the repertoire being mostly duets, Velasquez says: "We didn't want the usual back-to-back setup, where one performer sings a set, followed by the other, and they 'meet' in the end."

Best of all, the best-selling record artist notes, "The show is a celebration of my friendship with Pops."

SHOW STOPPER

Fernandez herself sees the concert as a means to empower women through music.

"We will sing about women's sentiments, fantasies, and passions," says Fernandez. That's why it's a must-see even for guys [who] want to know more about women."

"Queens ... on Fire," produced by StarMedia Entertainment in cooperation with GMA 7, is set Feb. 11 and 12 at the Ultra in Pasig City.

Directed by Rowell Santiago, the concert also features young singer Erik San-

tos as guest.

The band consists of Ric Mercado on guitar, Sonny Matias on second keyboard, Ferdinand Faustino on drums, Bobby Rasco on bass guitar and Raul Mitra on first keyboard.

The show will later tour the United States—San Diego, California on April 1; Los Angeles on April 2; Las Vegas, Nevada on April 8; San Francisco on April 9; Chicago on April 15; Atlantic City on April 17; Washington DC on April 23; and Guam on April 30.

Breakfast with Tiffany, former mall diva

By Bayani S. San Diego Jr.
Contributor

ASK ANY Manila-based writer: 9 a.m. is an ungodly hour for an interview. But for a phone conversation with 1980s teen sensation Tiffany, who's now a suburban mom in Los Angeles, California, it is not a bad proposition at all.

What self-respecting child of that decade of shoulder pads and Dippity-do Gel would pass up on the chance to reminisce? As it turns out, this one just might.

"There are things of the '80s that I certainly don't want to see again," Tiffany says, and then pauses for dramatic effect before blurting out, "like leg warmers!"

She takes that back instantly. Tiffany Renee Darwish says her life as a teenager was "a very special time."

To start with, she recalls, the music was inimitable: "The '80s sound was quirky—especially that early keyboard sound [that would be impossible to] remake now. At that time, it was fresh and cutting-edge. Whether it was good or not, I dunno. What it definitely was, was experimental. A lot of the producers then were just trying things out, and they came up with something different, funky, and goofy!"

The same words apply to early Tiffany music videos. "Well," she replies, deadpan, "I don't usually look at my old stuff because I'm very critical of myself. But every once in a while, for laughs, I put on the old videos. My friends find my reactions really funny."

In that aspect, she is "envious" of the pop princesses that came after her and Debbie Gibson (Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera). She explains: "They get to wear all those stylish clothes and star in polished, high-tech music videos. [In my time] I didn't even have a makeup artist, and I just wore T-shirts and jeans!"

Memorable gigs

Seriously now, Tiffany looks back on those years with fondness, even longing. Her most cherished memory of the '80s is touring "for two years straight" with the hottest hotties then, New Kids on the Block. If those El True Hollywood stories should be believed, she was

Early-morning chitchat with the '80s teen star who survived Playboy, the slings and arrows of outrageous celebrity, and touring with New Kids on the Block



TIFFANY

even romantically involved with one of the guys.

Because she was always on the road, she recounts, she found blending in school quite arduous. "Career became the normal life for me," she admits. "Touring with the New Kids, I was around peers at least. We just kinda hung out and goofed off."

She still bumps into the guys occasionally. "We try to keep in touch," she says. "It's tough because we all have our own busy lives. But just last year I did a show with Jordan Knight, and recently I got to talk with Donnie Wahlberg."

As for those romantic rumors?

"I've always considered them my own brothers," she quips, quick on the draw. "I'm always updated on what's happening in their lives and careers. I'm just so proud of all of them."

In the Me Decade, Tiffany scored not a few hits. Her 1987 debut single "I Think We're Alone Now" went quadruple platinum, and her follow-up album "Hold on

Old Friend's Hand" went platinum.

On hindsight, the secret of Tiffany's success is really simple. The producers pushed her albums by going straight to her target demographic: teens who were too young to handle Madonna.

At first, though, those men in suits didn't know what to do with her. "The label (MCA) was set to drop my project if they didn't find a way to sell the album," she says. Then one bright guy who had teen kids came up with a brilliant idea. "I couldn't sing in nightclubs because I was too young. So they said: Why not at the mall?"

Why not, indeed.

Mall diva

"It just made so much sense to me because I was always in the mall with my girl friends," Tiffany says. Thus, the certified mall rat became America's one and only mall diva.

"That mall tour was very special," she stresses. "It had never been done before." And, as it turns

out, it has not been repeated with as much success since.

But never one to pine for, or dwell on, the past, Tiffany is gungho about new goals. She is collaborating with other artists, hosting shows on MTV and VH-1, taking guitar lessons, honing her songwriting skills, and is mulling an acting career.

She has broken free of her teenybopper image, having posed for Playboy in 2002. Earlier, she came out with a "thoughtful, intelligent, graceful" comeback CD titled "The Color of Silence."

The powerful industry paper Billboard declared the CD as "one of the finest pop albums of 2001." The paper added: "It's also unpretentious. Consider it Tiffany's [challenge] to Alanis Morissette's landmark Jagged Little Pill."

She says "The Color of Silence" is her most personal and revealing album to date. "It's a reflection of my life over the past decade. A lot has changed. People are not aware that my music represents the pains and joys I've experienced as a musician, full-time mother, and successful businesswoman."

Wryly, she calls music-making her "transition and therapy," a realization she arrived at when she made the CD. "I had just gone through a divorce at the time."

Second wind

Now she is soaring on her second wind. Her son Elijah is 12 years old and she recently remarried, to a British businessman named Ben. She describes him as "down-to-earth [and] very warm." They have the same outlook in life, she says, and the same sense of humor.

Tiffany is coming to the Philippines for the concert "Ladies of the '80s," set Feb. 11 and 12 at the Araneta Coliseum, and Feb. 14 at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu.

"I'm planning to bring along my kid, my husband, and my best friend (and makeup artist)," she announces. There is a reason here. She is a frequent visitor to the country but, this time around, she wants to see it through the eyes of her loved ones.

"It would be great for my son to travel and experience a dif-

ferent culture. And since I'll be performing with Sheena Easton and Taylor Dayne, I'm sure it will be a safe environment. I'm excited for him to see the Philippines. It's an amazing place and the people are so kind!"

If she were 15 again, would Tiffany join a talent search like, say,

"American Idol?"

She actually considers that one. "I think it's great that there's a show where good young singers can get discovered," she says. "That was how I started—singing in church, in state fairs, in front of the grocery store... my parents just couldn't shut me up!"



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5. IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
6. BLADE TRINITY
7. SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
8. UNO
9. OCEAN'S TWELVE
10. ELEKTRA
11. MAD HOUSE
12. HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA

sm city fairview

1. WHITE NOISE
2. OCEAN'S TWELVE
3. NATIONAL TREASURE
4. BLADE TRINITY
5. MEET THE FOCKERS
6. ELEKTRA
7. ELEKTRA
8. KUNG FU HUSTLE
9. UNO
10. SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
11. HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
12. MAD HOUSE

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1. IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
2. MEET THE FOCKERS
3. WHITE NOISE
4. ELEKTRA
5. OCEAN'S TWELVE
6. ELEKTRA
7. HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
8. SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
9. KUNG FU HUSTLE
10. BLADE TRINITY
11. SALSA
12. MAD HOUSE

sm city sta. mesa

1. MEET THE FOCKERS
2. SALSA
3. ELEKTRA
4. HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
5. BLADE TRINITY
6. SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
7. KUNG FU HUSTLE
8. OCEAN'S TWELVE
9. ELEKTRA
10. WHITE NOISE

sm city southmall

1. IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
2. KUNG FU HUSTLE
3. ELEKTRA
4. MEET THE FOCKERS
5. MAD HOUSE
6. UNO
7. HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
8. BLADE TRINITY
9. OCEAN'S TWELVE
10. SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION

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1. BLADE TRINITY
2. KUNG FU HUSTLE
3. HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
4. OCEAN'S TWELVE
5. WHITE NOISE
6. IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
7. MEET THE FOCKERS
8. ELEKTRA

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1. ELEKTRA
2. UNO
3. HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
4. SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION

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1. HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
2. ELEKTRA
3. MEET THE FOCKERS
4. KUNG FU HUSTLE

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1. ELEKTRA
2. UNO
3. HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
4. MEET THE FOCKERS

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2 ENTERTAINMENT Metro WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2005

Erik back where he started

ERIK Santos, increasingly being known as the "prince of pop," shares his musical triumphs with his alma mater as he performs in a special homecoming concert, "Coming Home," on Feb. 4 at 7 p.m. at the Immaculate Conception Parochial School (ICPS) Quadrangle.

Joining him are young soprano Kim Flores and singer/comedienne K Brosas.

Erik went to ICPS for preschool, elementary and high school.

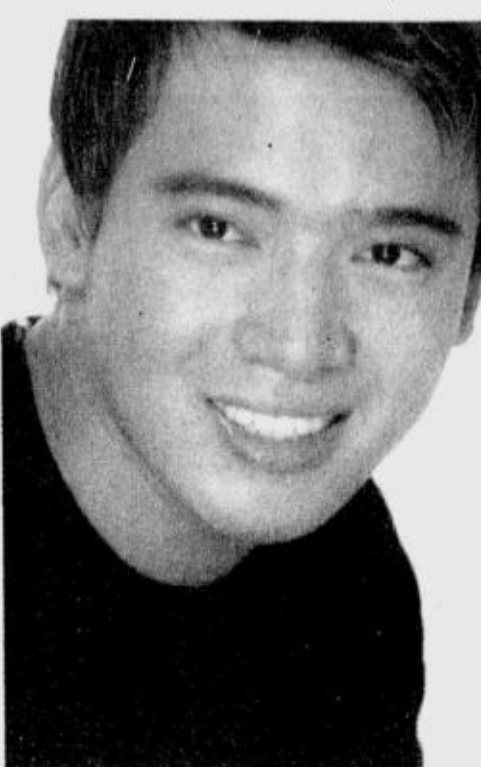
"ICPS has been a major part of my growing up years," he says. "I used to sing in almost every school activity. I really loved to

sing even back then."

He did more than just sing in those days. He was also a consistent honor student throughout high school and was the president of the student council in his senior year.

"I am very proud of my son Erik," says his mom Lita. "He always made me go up the stage when he received academic awards. So that even when his father finds it hard to work abroad and be away from his family for long periods of time, his father persists because it's been all worth it."

"Of course I had my share of naughtiness in high school,"



NAUGHTY in high school, Erik had his share of teenage crushes

Erik admits. "I had my teenage crushes. I had my first girlfriend when I was in fourth year high school and it was an unforgettable experience."

Today, because Erik is neck-deep in shows here and abroad, he has to temporarily stop from pursuing a degree in Nursing.

"I've had three years of Dentistry, then I shifted to Nursing," he explains. "But ever since I won in 'Star in a Million,' so many doors have been opening for me so I've had to put college temporarily on hold. As they say, opportunity comes only once so I have to seize the moment."

"But I am set on finishing college. I know that [show biz success] is a temporary thing so I must have something to fall back on if and when it's over."

After his homecoming concert, Erik will be the special guest in the Valentine show of Regine Velasquez and Pops Fernandez together on Feb. 11 and 12 at the Ultra (See related story, Page A21). He is promoting his new single, "Kung Akin ang Mundo," composed by Christian Martinez and included in his first solo album from Star Records. He has a mall

tour on Feb. 6 at Robinson's Metro East; Feb. 13, Star Mall Las Piñas; Feb. 19, Star Mall Edsa; and Feb. 20, Robinson's Angeles.

He is also set to perform with Vina Morales on Feb. 25 in San Diego; Feb. 26 in Las Vegas; and March 4 in Seattle. On March 17, he will perform in "Show-down of the Champions" in Dubai. In April, he will join the concert tour of Pops and Regine in seven key cities in the US.

Tickets to "Coming Home" are P250, P300, P500 and P1,000. Call 283-7050.

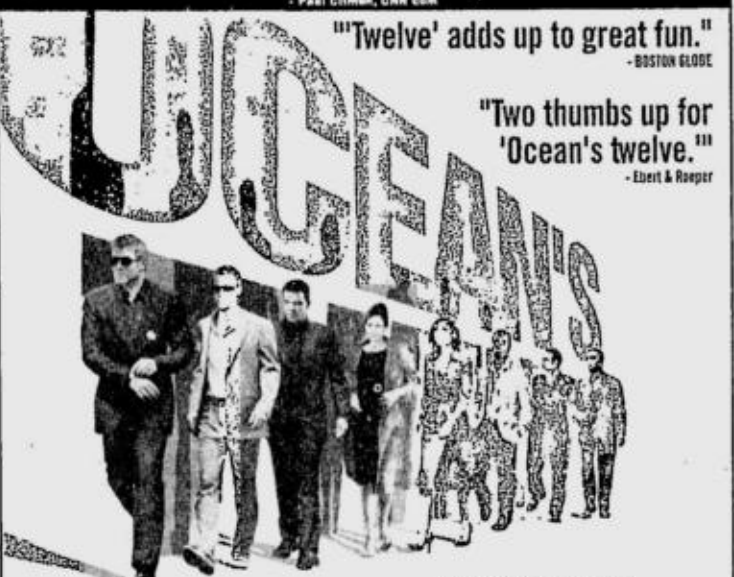


GLOBE TREAT

Every video purchase of "Cinderella Story" from Warner Home Video, entitles the buyer to a raffle coupon for a chance to win a gift set which includes a Globe Gizmo phone kit and cell phone accessories. Deadline for submission of entries is Feb. 7. In "Cinderella Story," the fast-rising pop singer Hilary goes through the struggles and adventures of Cinderella in a modern setting. Hilary's movie is now available in DVD and VCD.

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"OCEAN'S TWELVE" IS THE BEST ENSEMBLE FILM OF THE YEAR. - Paul Clinton, CNN.com



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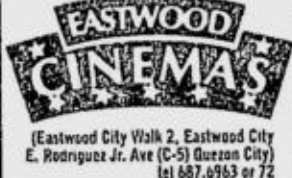
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7 (DOLBY) MEET THE FOCKERS
8 (DOLBY) MANO PO-3
9 (DOLBY) MAD HOUSE
10 (DOLBY) NED KELLY



- 1 (DOLBY) ELEKTRA
2 (DOLBY) MEET THE FOCKERS
3 (DOLBY) ELEKTRA
4 (DOLBY) ALL ABOUT LOVE



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4 (DOLBY) MEET THE FOCKERS
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SAISON SERIES. Ella Mae performs at Serendipity Lounge

'Rediscover Ella Mae' at Discovery Suites

ONE OF the most distinctive and sophisticated voices in Manila's music scene is back.

Rediscover the Queen of Soul, Ella Mae Saison, and let her powerful voice captivate you once again as she performs live at the Discovery Suites' Serendipity Lounge for a series of shows starting Friday, Jan. 28.

With special guest Joaquin, the "Rediscover Ella Mae" lounge series presents Ella Mae dishing out R&B, rock-soul, pop and songs from her soon-to-be-released CD, "For Broken Hearts Only" from Star Records.

"Rediscover Ella Mae" is presented by Discovery Suites, San Miguel Corp., 92.3 Joey FM and Viva Mineral Water.

Other "Rediscover Ella Mae" show dates for the year are Feb. 25, April 1, April 29, May 27, June 24, July 29, Aug. 26, Sept. 30, Oct. 28, Nov. 25 and Dec. 16.

Show starts at 9 p.m. For tickets, call 635-2222.

6 top 'Dance Idol'

SIX GROUPS emerged as the first winners of "Dance Idol," the biggest inter-dance genre contest for the best up-and-coming dance groups in and around Metro Manila.

The dance competition was held Jan. 8 at the UP Theater in Diliman, Quezon City.

The 12-member L-Crew topped the premiere open level. The Miriam College High School Pep Squad and De La Salle Lipa won the cheer dance and open category, respectively, in the high school level.

Ateneo's CADS elicited the biggest applause from the crowd and the judges to win in the college level's street dance category.

But St. Scholastica's College Manila proved to be the big winner as its Pep Squad and Danz Edge groups took home the top prizes in the college level's cheer dance and jazz categories.

Guest performers included Roxy, the Center for Movement and Music, Battle Crew, Out of the Box and Julie Alagde. Hosts were Manila Genesis Entertainment's PamG and producer-host John Aguilar.

"Dance Idol" was produced by StreetPark Productions Inc. and sponsored by Mirinda in cooperation with the Philippine Sports Commission, Kotex, Kubla's and Gasoline Alley. Media sponsors were Wave 89.9, RX 93.1, 97.1 DWLS FM, 103.5 K-Lite, Candy, Seventeen, Fudge Magazine and Yehey.com.

Part of the proceeds goes to the scholarship fund of Gary Valenciano's Shining Light Foundation Inc.

The four-part "Dance Idol" special will be shown on Studio 23 on Feb. 14-17, 5:15-5:50 p.m.

For inquiries and advertisements, call SPI, 436-8882 to 83.

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3 MAD HOUSE	7 BLADE TRINITY
4 WHITE NOISE	8 ELEKTRA

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1 ELEKTRA	5 TWO BROTHERS
2 OCEAN'S TWELVE	6 MEET THE FOCKERS
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE	7 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION
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3 ELEKTRA 11:45, 2:25, 5:05, 7:45, 10:25 PG-13
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THE LATE Lovelace, star of "Deep Throat"

Sundance docu probes 'Deep Throat'

PARK CITY—It was shot for \$25,000 in just six days. Its male star was a film-crew member shoved in front of the camera as a last-minute replacement. Its director readily conceded it was not even a good movie.

Yet "Deep Throat" was a cultural phenomenon whose theatrical grosses are estimated at \$600 million, and it became an emblem of decadence for anti-pornography crusaders and the namesake for an informer who helped bring down a president.

"Inside Deep Throat," a documentary that premiered this weekend at the Sundance Film Festival, examines the legacy of the 1972 flick, a

forerunner of today's hardcore adult-entertainment industry and a touchstone for obscenity laws.

Produced by Brian Grazer, whose films include "Apollo 13" and "A Beautiful Mind," "Inside Deep Throat" opens theatrically in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston and five other cities Feb. 11.

Grazer had been contemplating a film about "Deep Throat" star Linda Lovelace, who died in a 2002 car crash, but found the focus too narrow.

"I was less interested in the story of Linda Lovelace and more on the movie's effect on popular culture," Grazer said. AP



PORN AND POP. Producer Grazer is less interested in the story of Lovelace than the movie's effect on pop culture

'Are We There Yet?' already there in first place

LOS ANGELES—The road trip comedy "Are We There Yet?" earned \$18.5 million to quickly arrive at first place in the weekend box office.

The family picture starring rapper-actor Ice Cube in its opening weekend sent "Coach Carter" back to the bench when the basketball drama brought in \$11 million for second place, according to studio estimates released Sunday.

"Assault on Precinct 13," a remake of the 1976 "cult classic" about cops and criminals joining forces against a jail siege by gang members, took in \$7 million in its first weekend and finished sixth in the box office tally.

"Are We There Yet?" follows Cube as he embarks on a road trip with two manipulative children whom he tolerates only because he is trying to woo their attractive divorced mother.

Showing in wide release at 2,709 theaters, "Are We There Yet?" averaged \$6,829 per cinema.

"It's a total family picture," said Rory Bruer, president of distribution for Sony Pictures. "It's very funny and Ice Cube did a terrific job. He's just hysterical in it."

Cube, 35, will next appear in "XXX: State of the Union," scheduled for release in April. The action

film sequel will also feature Samuel L. Jackson, star of "Coach Carter."

The PG-rated comedy continued the trend of family films performing well at the box office, especially over the past six months, said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations.

"Meet the Fockers," a PG-13 rated film, continued to do well and is marching toward becoming the highest grossing live-action comedy of all time. The in-law farce collected \$10.2 million over the weekend to push its five week total to \$247.7 million.

The blockbuster comedy moved into second place in the live-action comedy category behind record-holder "Home Alone," which earned \$285.8 million. The God-comedy "Bruce Almighty" dropped to third place at \$242.7 million.

The blizzard that swept across the Midwest and clobbered the Northeast kept many movie fans from the theaters, but the numbers remained slightly higher than the same weekend last year.

Revenues from the top 12 movies were up 3.9 percent from last year.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday in North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc.:

1) "Are We There Yet?"—\$18.5



THEY'VE ARRIVED. Ice Cube with (Nia Long, Philip Bolden, and Aleisha Allen in "Are We There Yet?"

million.

2) "Coach Carter"—\$11 million.

3) "Meet the Fockers"—\$10.2 million.

4) "In Good Company"—\$8.5 million.

5) "Racing Stripes"—\$7.06

million.

6) "Assault on Precinct 13"—\$7.02 million.

7) "The Phantom of the Opera"—\$5.02 million.

8) "White Noise"—\$5 million.

9) "The Aviator"—\$4.8 million.

10) "Elektra"—\$3.8 million. AP

Here, there, everywhere

CANNES, France—In the music business, it's a vision that may soon be consigned to history: Grandpa slumping into the recliner, closing his eyes and enjoying a favorite rendition of an operatic solo.

For music lovers these days, the sedentary lifestyle is out.

A generation after the birth of portable tunes on the Walkman, technology has made music available nearly everywhere for today's on-the-go consumer—and the recording industry sees a new wave to ride.

The buzzwords Sunday at the Midem music industry conference in the French Riviera resort town of Cannes were mobile music, seen as the great hope for an industry that has suffered shrinking sales in recent years.

The offerings are nearly limitless: music through a wristwatch, hits played on a literally loud shirt, or New Age themes on underwater headphones at the gym swimming pool during a hard-



driving backstroke.

One pressing question is how music will reach ears in the future. Mobile phone executives predict their gadgetry will become the devices of choice, possibly competing with hot gadgets like Apple's iPod.

Shot in the arm

"People want music whenever

[they want] and wherever they are," said Guy Lawrence, a marketing executive for mobile phone operator Vodafone, in a presentation. "The good thing about music is that it's ubiquitous."

Music industry executives have been grappling for ways to combat illegal sharing of music files on the Internet for free, which has cut into sales of recorded music.

The recent market success of portable devices like the iPod, which plays music downloaded for a fee, has given the industry a needed shot in the arm.

Music industry veterans admit the Internet has democratized music, offering consumers the chance to be selective about songs without having the middleman of a record company producer decide for them.

But does anybody really listen to music anymore?

"Try and go a day without hearing music," said John Kennedy, who heads the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry. Like elevator music of old, listening today is mostly a "secondary" activity for consumers as they work, commute or work out, Kennedy said.

Some industry observers pine away for the old days when the musical creativity and fitful on-stage antics of bands like The Who were part of the love of the music business. AP

Guessing game over: Oscar bets announced at last

LOS ANGELES—And the nominees are...

Hollywood was to find out just hours ago the players nominated to take the field in the 2005 battle for the Oscars.

In an annual ritual that has the media hordes descending bleary-eyed on the headquarters of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the names of the nominees are read out before television cameras at 5:30 a.m. local time, so the news can catch commuters on the way out the door on the East Coast, where it is three hours later.

Jamie Foxx's electric performance as soul singer Ray Charles in "Ray" and films about an ambi-

tious female boxer, two losers looking for love in California wine country and a billionaire aviation visionary with a passion for movie stars and washing his hands, all loomed large in the nominations up till yesterday.

The speculation around town was that the Martin Scorsese epic biography about Howard Hughes, "The Aviator," Clint Eastwood's dark and tear-stained boxing drama "Million Dollar Baby" and Alexander Payne's heart-breaking comedy "Sideways" would lead the pack, with each expected to win six or more nominations in the major categories.

On Saturday night, the Producers Guild of America named "The

Aviator" its Best Picture of the Year. In 11 of the past 15 years, PGA members have honored films that went on to win the Oscar Best Picture—including its choice last year, "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King."

Some film experts dismissed 2004 as a poor year for films in general but an outstanding one for male actors.

The town has been in love with Foxx since his heartfelt acceptance last week of a Golden Globe acting award that won for him a standing ovation.

In an unusual tribute, Chris Rock, the comedian who will host the Oscars on Feb. 27, told a New York Times interviewer that if

Foxx did not win, "I'm gonna talk about it on the show ... Jamie Foxx is not going to walk out of that place without an Oscar."

Close fight

While critics hail his performance as Ray Charles as nothing short of a cinematic transformation, no actor is an island and Foxx has plenty of competition.

Among the possible contenders, according to forecasts, were Spanish actor Javier Bardem for his performance as a man paralyzed from the neck down in "The Sea Inside," Don Cheadle as the hotel keeper out to save lives in an ethnic slaughter in "Hotel Rwanda," Johnny Depp as Peter

Pan's creator in "Finding Neverland," and Leonardo DiCaprio as Hughes in "The Aviator."

Also seen as possible nominees were Paul Giamatti as the wine-loving teacher in "Sideways," Clint Eastwood as the trainer in "Million Dollar Baby" and Liam Neeson as the pioneer sex expert Alfred Kinsey in "Kinsey."

It was speculated that the Best Picture and Best Director categories could end in a classic "High Noon" showdown between two of the town's major filmmakers — Eastwood, who directed "Million Dollar Baby" and who, at age 74, seems to get better with each film; and Martin Scorsese, creator of "Raging Bull," "Taxi Driv-

er" and "Mean Streets."

While his works may be studied in film schools, Scorsese has never won an Oscar Best Picture or Best Director.

The other films vying to be nominated for the top plum were the year's most controversial political movie "Fahrenheit 9/11," drama "Finding Neverland," "Hotel Rwanda," "Sideways," "Ray," "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" and "Kinsey."

The Best Actress race seemed to shape up as a battle between Annette Bening, for her performance as the actress with an ego and heart as big as Buckingham Palace in "Being Julia," and Hilary Swank, who plays the gritty boxer dangerously searching to "be someone" in "Million Dollar Baby."

The two faced off in the 2000 Oscars when Swank, in an upset, won for her portrayal of a woman living as a man in "Boys Don't Cry."

Other possible Best Actress nominees were British actress Imelda Staunton, as the kindly abortionist in "Vera Drake"; Kate Winslet, as the disappearing love interest in "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"; Catalina Sandino Moreno, as the drug mule in "Maria, Full of Grace" and Emmy Rossum as the love interest in "The Phantom of the Opera." Reuters



MARTIN Scorsese



CLINT Eastwood



HILARY Swank



ANNETTE Bening



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